

THE  
SCHOOL  
FOR  
WIDOWS.

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VOLUME THE SECOND,



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THE  
SCHOOL  
FOR  
WIDOWS.

A

NOVEL.  
IN THREE VOLUMES.

By CLARA REEVE,  
AUTHOR OF THE OLD ENGLISH BARON,  
&c. &c.

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VOLUME THE SECOND.

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SCHOOL  
WIDDOWS

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LETTER VI.

MRS. DARNFORD. IN CONTINUATION.

HOW comes it, my dear friend, that, at first sight of a person, we receive a favourable or unfavourable impression? It is sometimes just, but as often the contrary; it ought not to be relied on. Yet, there is a something like intuition, which attracts kindred minds, and repels discordant ones, and which we cannot understand nor account for.

It is certain, that I felt something repulsive from Lady Haughton and her

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children, and that this presentiment was fully justified.

The young ladies had been under the tuition of a French governess, who had taught them airs and graces, self-confidence and vanity; but they were ignorant of those graces which attend on Virtue and her pupils only. They had received no instructions relative to religion, or morality: they were proud and conceited; full of remarks on the weaknesses and imperfections of others, entirely ignorant of their own.

I behaved with all the politeness I was mistress of to them, in hope to excite theirs in return; but it had no effect: my politeness to them was their due, and a thing of course; but theirs to me was unnecessary. I was a reduced person, and received wages for my attendance on them; which made me a dependent, not much above a servant.

These

These things were more implied than expressed ; dropt at times only, but so as to render it impossible to mistake their meaning.

I strove to merit their confidence, before I should demand it ; but they were shy of conversing with me : they would talk aside, in a half whisper, laugh and sneer among themselves, but seldom allow me any share of their conversation.

At length, I told them, it was reckoned a mark of ill-breeding, and desired them to forbear it.

They did it so much the more, and in defiance of me.

I read French with them : they could chatter away among themselves ; but they knew little or nothing of the grammar, either of French or English. I offered to read history : they objected to it, as dull and dry, and only fit to set them asleep.

I proposed the Spectators. They were only fit for children.

Poetry — morality — essays. Nothing pleased them.

I introduced the Theatre of Education by Madame de Genlis. This was new, and they seemed to pay some attention to it.

The first pieces were for children only. I desired them to look out for one they liked, and to translate it into English. They did not like the trouble of it.

I mentioned this book to Lady Haughton, spoke highly of it, and begged her to use her influence with them, to oblige them to read and translate it.

She heard me with indifference ; said, she could not insist upon it, but would advise them to read it, if agreeable. Miss Morton, her niece, was in her fifteenth year ; her daughters were in their fourteenth

teenth and thirteenth. It was too late to treat them like children; though, in knowledge of every kind, they were as backward.

I recommended the other works of Madame de Genlis; the Tales of the Castle, which I gave to the young ladies; Adele and Theodore, which I begged Lady Haughton to peruse, as a system of education.

The young ladies were neither entertained nor improved: it shewed them defects in themselves, which they had no inclination to amend; it reproved their pride, vanity, and indolence. They were offended, and vented their spleen and ill-humour upon me. My lady thought the other work a very impertinent satire upon parents and guardians.

I endeavoured to instruct them in the outlines of religion and morality. They

either gaped over them, or else talked aside while I was reading.

I introduced books of a serious kind: Fordyce's Sermons to Young Women; The Father's Legacy, by Dr. Gregory; A Father's Instructions, by Dr. Percival; Madame de Lambert's Advice to a Son and Daughter; Mrs. Chapone's works, and several others; without effect.

I thought it my duty to tell them theirs: they only flouted me.

"To what purpose, ladies," said I, "was I brought here, if you will not suffer me to be of any service to you? I wish you would tell me what I can do to oblige you."

"Why, then, Madam," said Miss Morton, "you must do as Mademoiselle Bourdier did with us. She did not tease us with dry lessons of morality; but she read us little stories, full of fun and humour; she translated some short things, and let us

copy

copy them, to shew my aunt and uncle, and their friends; she entered into all our little parties; she played with us, danced and sung with us, and always spoke well of us; she taught us to make a little learning go a great way, and to display what we did know to advantage; she made us love her, and be satisfied with ourselves. If you would do so, we should live well with you."

" Then, she was exactly like Dorina, in *The Spoiled Child*; a comedy that I will read to you, as a lesson. But, ladies, I cannot act as she did; my principles forbid it. I have undertaken an important charge, and I am obliged to perform the duties of it. I am accountable to your friends, to you, and to myself; and I cannot be pleased with myself, if I do not. But, beside, I have heard Mademoiselle was discharged disgracefully: is it true?"

“ Poor Mademoiselle ! she had a little misfortune.”

“ That is, a little child : is it not so ?”

“ Surely, Madam, that is no business of yours ; and beside, you, that are so perfect, should be above scandal.”

“ That is no scandal, that is known to every body : but, setting the *little* misfortune aside, she was a very improper person to have the care of young ladies. Suffer me to read you a pretty comedy of Madame de Genlis, in which you will hear such a person treated as she deserves.”

I read the Spoiled Child to them.

They were sullen and gloomy. They could not have any pleasure in such books as only served to point out to them all their faults.

“ If you will not hear them, how can you amend them ?”

They did not desire to hear of them.

“ Then, I can be of no use to you. I  
will

will talk with my lady, and tell her so ; for I cannot take her money, and lose my own time, to no purpose."

" Just as you please, Madam !"

I had a conversation with Lady Haughton. She was not convinced of the deficiency in the young people's education. She said, when girls were almost grown to the stature of women, they were no longer to be treated as children ; that her children were thought amiable and accomplished by as good judges as myself ; and she would not suffer them to be made unhappy, in order to teach them what they had no desire to learn.

I asked, what service I was to do them in this situation ?

" Why, I want you to sit with them when I am otherwise engaged, and when their masters attend them ; and, if you do not like this, Mrs. Darnford, you may leave my family whenever you please."

“ It will be very easy, Madam, to find a person qualified for this office ; a servant may do it : but I could not be satisfied to receive a salary for doing nothing.”

“ I acquit you of that ; and I have no desire to part with you—But, do as you please, Mrs. Darnford.”

She left the room.

I went, the next morning, to my worthy friend and counsellor, and told him all that had passed. He said, these were disagreeable circumstances ; but he advised me to bear with them till I could meet with something more eligible, and he would be looking out for me in the mean time.

The young ladies no longer kept any terms with me. Authorized by my lady, they treated me with insolence and contempt.

I no longer took any thought for their improvement, but waited with some impatience for my release.

Sir

Sir Gilbert Haughton was an inoffensive, peaceable man; an admirer of his lady's wisdom: who submitted quietly to her government; and, in return, she suffered him to enjoy the run of his own house. He appeared as the master of it when she received company; and he actually kept the key of the cellar, and overlooked the butler.

His conversation was confined to the wind and the weather: I scarcely ever heard him speak upon any other subject, any farther than an affirmative, or a negative.

He was courteous to every body. He generally saluted me with civility; saying—"A fine day, Madam;" or—"An easterly wind, Madam," &c. He seemed to go beyond his usual bounds, when he heard I was going to leave the family.

I had answered him in his own way, and paid him more attention than he usually received; and, I suppose, that pleased him.

When the family met at dinner, after the usual compliments of the day and the weather, Sir Gilbert said—"I hear you are going to leave us, Madam. I am very sorry for it."

I bowed, and was silent.

My lady drew her mouth on one side. The young ladies tossed their heads, and smiled scornfully.

Sir Gilbert said—"May I know the reason, Madam, of your leaving our family?"

I answered—"Sir, it is because the young ladies have no farther need of my assistance."

My lady frowned—"You are very inquisitive, Sir Gilbert. What signifies it to you, whether Mrs. Darnford goes stays?"

"Nay, my lady, I only asked the question: I hope there is no harm in that. Mrs. Darnford is a very well-behaved wo-

man;

man; and I should think you would not get one more proper."

"Surprizing!—How come you to know her qualifications?"

"Not I, Madam: I don't pretend to know any farther of people than their behaviour."

"Well, then," said my lady, with a jeering laugh, "be pleased to know, then, Sir, that Mrs. Darnford chuses to leave us, and to go where her merit is better understood."

"Enough, my lady: I am satisfied."

The young ladies whispered and giggled all dinner-time. Every eye was upon me; and I was glad to retire from the parlour.

My worthy friend had called in the morning of this day, to tell me of another lady who wanted a governess for her children. In consequence of which, I declared my resolution of leaving Lady Haughton the following week; and, though

though she was influenced by her children, she was displeased at my departure.

I dragged on three miserable months in this family, with every external of what contributes to ease and comfort, but without one happy day. I had no society, and was not permitted to converse with myself. Some days before I left it, I received the following letter—

“ LORD A—— TO MRS. DARNFORD.

“ Why, Madam, do you still fly me, and reject my services? To what cause must I attribute your inflexibility? The ties between Darnford and you are dissolved, and nothing but shadows remain to hinder our being united in the bonds of an indissoluble friendship: yet still you fly me; and, in so doing, own that you fear me. This fear I must investigate: there are two causes from which it may arise; either you hate me more than others, or

else.

else you love me, or fear that you may love me.

“ Oh, that I dared to believe the latter ! I will no longer bear this cruel suspense ; I will come to an explanation with you.

“ That I have loved you long, you know too well ; otherwise you cannot reconcile your behaviour to the rules of politeness, which you observe to every body but me, who would risk every thing to contribute to your happiness.

“ You have fulfilled every duty to your husband, under the most trying circumstances : what remains farther ? I loved George Darnford ; he was a good-natured, careless fellow, most agreeable in company, and over a cheerful glass. I tried to check his passion for gaming. I tried to extricate him from the troubles he brought upon himself, but in vain. I followed him with my friendship to the last, and I paid the last duties to his memory.

“ I am

“ I am free to pursue my own views; you are free also: but you have a proud and indomitable spirit, that spurns the idea of an obligation.

“ Oh, but you cannot forgive nor forget my proposal in your husband’s life-time! You admire the wisdom and virtue of the old Romans; yet some of them did such things. Cato, the austere Cato, lent his wife to his friend Hortensius, and afterwards took her again.

“ We are no longer in this predicament. I only make this reference to the past, to induce you to forgive, and think no more of it.

“ All times and people have had their prejudices: these have, in time, given way, and were succeeded by new prejudices of different kinds.

“ From being over strict in their principles, they have gone to the other extreme, and become too relaxed and profligate. In  
all

all moral objects there are two extremes; and there is also a medium.

“ A state of concubinage is by no means so immoral or disgraceful as your very strict people represent it.

“ The Book which you venerate, and I respect, is of a more tolerating spirit in this particular. I forbear to produce instances, but refer to your own memory and observation.

“ And now, Madam, I will once more make you a proposal, which I beg you will honour with your serious consideration; and, when you have made up your mind upon the subject, let me know your determination.

“ I will settle the farm in Essex upon you and your heirs, irrevocably: I bought it with this view, to restore it to you whenever you would deign to accept it. The cottage shall be yours, and a pretty little parcel of land about it, lately purchased; which,

which, together, make a farm sufficient to amuse and employ one who delights in rural occupations.

“ These I mention as resources only in case of accidents, and a barrier against the *foul fiend* whom you have lately paid court to, while the arms of your friend were impatient to receive you, and protect you from his detestable approach.

“ I invite you to share my fortune and my heart; to live where it pleases you. If you chuse to visit the Continent, I will attend you to any part of it. My house in town, either of my seats are at your service: all are yours; and I am yours, when and where you chuse to command me.

“ Come, Rosalind! Oh, come! for without thee

“ What pleasure can the country have for me?

“ Come, Rosalind! Oh, come! my farm, my kine,

“ My tender flocks, my fields, and all, are thine.”

“ I chuse to explain myself so, that we may fully understand each other. I make

no dark and obscure promises of future recompence.

“ I should not like to have my name set at the top of a lamentable ballad, shewing how the base man seduced the nymph under promise of marriage.

“ I treat with you as a free woman; one who knows the world, and has sense enough to despise the censure of it, and who lives to her own feelings.

“ I do not expect you to be very explicit in your answer. Only say—“ *I shall go to the cottage in the month of May, and enjoy the beauties of the Spring;*” or, “ *I should like to go to France,*” or “ *to Italy;*” or, *any time and place where you chuse to spend the summer.*” Only give me the *hint* I sigh and long for, and I will fly to meet you with all the warmth and tenderness of love and friendship. I am, dear Madam,

“ Yours—all yours—and only yours,

“ A—.”

“ Direct

“ Direct your answer to me in town ; I shall not leave it till I hear from you. Pray do not consult Counsellor M—, but make me your counsellor.”

My answer will be the best comment upon this letter. I wrote it at a leisure moment, in the morning, before I came to breakfast—

“ MY LORD,

“ FEW women have been so peculiarly circumstanced as I have. I have no friend to refer to in a case of delicacy ; I must, therefore, speak for myself.

“ Your letter is a master-piece of art and sophistry. I shall answer it with sincerity and plain dealing, in order to put an end to all future correspondence between us, once and for ever.

“ Your lordship may think me prejudiced or precise, or whatever you please, when

when I declare, that I would rather fall into the arms of the *foul fiend* you have described *Poverty*, than accept of a deliverance by indirect or dishonest means, such as are contrary to the principles I profess, which have hitherto been my guide and my counsellors.

“ Lest you should think your arguments unanswerable, I will venture to reply to them: a puff of wind is able to overthrow them.

“ The man, who could endeavour to seduce the wife of his friend, and to make her husband necessary to her seduction, is the last man I would chuse for my counsellor, friend, and protector.

“ You have taken up an idea in your defence that is false and groundless.

“ The Romans were not guilty of such vile actions: they respected the holy rites of marriage; they divorced their wives for adultery, and sometimes for a mere suspicion

cion of it, as in the case of Cæsar's wife Pompeia. Cato the Younger did not lend his wife upon the urgency of his friend Hortensius: he divorced his wife, Marcia, and she was solemnly married to Hortensius. Her father Philip, and Cato, were present at the marriage, which was celebrated with the consent of all parties. Cato did not receive Marcia again till after the death of her husband Hortensius: then, indeed, he was re-married to her; he put the highest confidence in her; he put his children and family under her care, when he followed the party of Pompey, and went over to Africa.

“ Pray observe, that I do not defend this action of Cato's; I only put it upon a fair basis, according to the testimony of Plutarch and other historians. In this light, it does not bear the least resemblance to any part of your lordship's conduct; and I beg that you will inform yourself

yourself better, before you compare your character with that of Cato.

“ Your appeal to the sacred writings is still less excuseable.

“ You have not distinguished between the Old and the New Testament; to confound them together answered your purpose better.

“ The Mosaic law was local and temporary: that of the Gospel, immutable and eternal; calculated for all times, and all people.

“ The former allowed a plurality of wives, as it has always been customary in the Eastern countries; but I never knew that it allowed a woman to have two husbands. I profess the religion of the Gospel, and hold myself bound to observe it's laws. It signifies nothing to me what was allowed by former legislators; I submit to the laws of my own religion, and my own country.

“ I am,

“ I am, however, persuaded, that if Cato had been born under the Christian dispensation, he would have been a strict observer of it's laws.

“ Thus far, my lord, in answer to your arguments. For the rest, I thank you for your generous and charitable intentions towards me; which, I make no doubt, you think do me honour.

“ I forgive your prejudices, as I hope you will mine: but they are so different, as to render it impossible for us to live together; and, had you really offered me your hand, with your heart and person, I could not have accepted it.

“ I respect your sincerity, in disdaining to raise expectations you never intended to fulfil. I wish all men, that hold your opinions, were as honest in this respect.

“ As I have fully made up my mind, and have taken my final resolution, to decline your lordship's proposals, I beg that

our correspondence may here be concluded.

“ I wish your lordship every good in present and future ; and remain,

“ Your most humble servant,

“ F. D.”

I did not send this letter till the day I left Lady Haughton’s, that my lord might have no clue to find me at my new destination.

Lady Haughton behaved with more politeness the day I left her, than during the whole time I resided there : she wished I could have made myself agreeable to her young people ; she believed they had been too much indulged by their late governess ; but it was now too late to begin a new method. She wished me better success in future.

“ I spent a few days with my friend Mr. M——, before I went to my new appointment.

During that time I heard a very indifferent character of Mrs. Ilford, to whom I was engaged.

A lady, who visited Mr. M——, told me she was a very bad mother; that she loved some of her children, and hated others; that she was proud and ill-natured, envious and spiteful; in short, that she was a very disagreeable woman to live with.

Mrs. Langston did not spare her, nor, indeed, any body; for she seemed informed of every one's ill qualities, and made no scruple to declare them.

Mr. M—— advised me not to go to Mrs. Ilford's, but to wait for something more eligible. He said, Mrs. Langston saw a great deal of company, and might hear of another situation.

I answered, that I had given my word, and would make the trial; I thought it could not be more disagreeable than that I had left.

Mrs.

Mrs. Langston said, she would be upon the look-out for me; and, if she heard of any thing more agreeable, she would let me know.

I have a good mind to give you a short sketch of this lady's conversation.

" I like you well enough to endeavour to serve you—but, good Lord! to see what luck some folks have! There was Susan Brittle—she had singed the wings of her character, spent the greatest part of her fortune, and was at her last shift; when old Lady Bilson lost her companion, and was seeking out for another. Mrs. Martlet goes and recommends Sukey, and cries her up for a nonpareil. Lady Bilson took her without farther enquiry. Sukey put on airs of prudery and preciseness; followed my lady to the Tabernacle; read books of theology to her all day; watched with her all night when she was sick; and pretended a great affection for her. Be-

hold! in three years time, the old lady stept aside, and left Susan three thousand pounds, and all her cloaths, linen, and jewels. Well—there was poor Mrs. Pilgrim, as good a creature as ever lived, went from one place to another, and could find no rest for the sole of her foot; but was obliged to go and live in Wales, and board for fifteen pounds a year.—Depend upon it, my dear, I will do all I can to serve you; but luck is all: give us luck, and you may throw us into the sea."

"By your account," said Mr. M——, "the young woman earned her fortune hardly enough; but I would not wish my friend to sacrifice to luck, as you call it. I would have her exert her own merit and industry, and rely upon God's blessing upon them."

"Well, and so she should, to be sure; but, in spite of all her merit, and all your wisdom, there is such a thing as luck, depend upon it."

There

There is a specimen of Mrs. Langston for you ! I shall not let her say any more at present ; perhaps I may speak of her in future.

I went to Mrs. Ilford's without any expectations ; for I was out of luck, as Mrs. Langston said, and I had resolved not to pay court to Fortune.

Mrs. Ilford was exactly what she was described : she was the mother of six children, all lovely and promising ; three of them she loved, and the other three she disliked.

Mr. Ilford was a plain, blunt man ; with a good understanding, very little cultivated. He saw his wife's faults, and told her of them rudely, but he had no magnificence in him : with good-nature and courtesy, he might have been persuaded to any thing ; but peevishness and thwarting made him ten times worse.

With an honest, worthy husband, a plen-

tiful fortune, fine children, and every thing that is wished and desired, Mrs. Ilford was a most unhappy woman.

She was one of those wretched mortals that extract misery out of every thing about them.

She was desirous of giving her children a good education: they were handsome, and amiable, yet she was never satisfied with them nor their doings; she studied to find faults in them.

She was always changing her servants; she put no confidence in them, and they had no affection for her.

With all these miseries in her mind, I really believe, she meant to act rightly; but her unfortunate temper cast a shade upon every thing; and she thought she was doing her duty, while she was making herself miserable, and every one around her.

The eldest son was at a public school: one of his mother's cares was, lest his morals

rsals should be corrupted; and in this there was some reason.

The eldest daughter was put under my care: her mother thought her the superior to all the rest in genius and abilities of every kind; but in this she was mistaken.

The second daughter was a sweet, amiable girl; lovely, modest, and ingenuous. She was discouraged and depressed, in order to give consequence to the elder; and she received many advantages from this discouragement. She was the darling of all the family, but the mother; who could not bear that she should be distinguished.

The next child was a son, a fine manly boy, rather rough in his temper, but of a docile and generous spirit, that might be excited to do any thing by praise, but was hardened by undue punishment. I desired to have that child under my care, as well as his sisters.

The next was a girl about four years

old; the youngest a boy under two. The eldest daughter was just twelve years old.

I put my pupils into training, tried their capacities, and was pleased to find they had been well initiated in their own language, and were docile and agreeable in their dispositions. I taught them with pleasure, and put Mrs. Barbauld's Lessons into the hands of the little girl.

Mr. Ilford asked me, what I thought of his children?

I spoke of them as they deserved; and he heard me with great satisfaction.

" You do not, then, find any of them deficient in understanding?"

" Not in the least, Sir; but I shall be a better judge some time hence."

Mrs. Ilford had taken it into her head, that Miss Anna, the second daughter, and James, the second son, were inferior to all the rest: this was the reason of Mr. Ilford's enquiry,

enquiry, and I was soon perfectly convinced of the contrary.

When I had been a month in this family, I received the following letters. The first was from Lord A—.

“ MADAM,

“ You are a proud, ungrateful, saucy woman, unworthy of my love or esteem. I leave you to your fate; to that Poverty, which you prefer to my friendship. I hope, and believe, you will one day repent of your behaviour to me, when youth and beauty are gone, and no man will give himself any trouble about you: then you may regret the friend that you have lost. I have done with you for ever! Farewel!

“ A—.”

“ P. S. I shall leave London in a month. If you should repent of your behaviour within that time, you may let me know.”

The second was from the youngest Miss Haughton—

“ MADAM,

“ ONE of your late pupils is very desirous to ask your pardon, for her share of the impertinent treatment you met with at Lady Haughton’s; and the more she thinks, the more she is ashamed of it.

“ Since you went away, I have read the first volume of the Theatre of Education, which you left behind you; and I have received both pleasure and advantage from it.

“ I should take it as a very great favour, if you will have the goodness to lend me the other volumes: I will take the greatest care of them, and return them all together.

“ I have, in a manner, put myself to school to these books, and hope to make some amends for the time I have lost.

“ I remember your instructions, and observe

observe them as much as is in my power. I am sensible that we all wanted them, and might have improved by your company and assistance.

“ You must know, Madam, that my cousin and sister were determined to persuade mamma not to take another governess; and they would never have forgiven me, if I had not joined with them in this, and all other things; or else I was desirous to have behaved better to you in all respects.

“ I will send the person that brings this, to-morrow at this time; and beg you will send the books by her, if convenient.

“ I should be still more obliged to you, if you will recommend such books as you think will be agreeable and improving to me; and I will save my pocket-money, and buy them as I can afford.

“ I beg pardon, Madam, for giving you all this trouble; but I have such an

opinion of your goodness, as to believe you will excuse it. I am, Madam,  
Yours very truly, "Your humble servant,  
" BELIZA HAUGHTON."

The third letter was from Betsey Moyle. The contents were to this effect—That her mother, and all the family, missed me very much, and were very desirous to hear of my health and safety; that they hoped I was situated to my liking, or else that I would come into their country again; that her mother had lately met with an old friend, who lived near the town of W—; that she was informed they wanted a person of ability to open a school there; that such an one, well recommended, could not fail of success; that her mother had heard me wish for such an employment, and she thought, perhaps, this might suit me.

She begged I would excuse the liberty, and that I would answer her letter. I resolved

solved to consider this proposal well before I replied to it.

I wrote an answer to Bell Haughton's letter. Her messenger called the next day, and I sent it with the books, as desired—

“ DEAR YOUNG LADY,

“ It gives me very great pleasure to know, that the time I spent at the house of your parents was not wholly lost; that you have remembered my instructions, and have taken the generous resolution to finish your own education. I shall be happy to do every thing in my power to assist your studies for this laudable purpose. I send the remaining volumes of the Theatre of Education; and request your acceptance of the whole set, as a token of friendship and remembrance: and I will give you a list of books, such as may be of use to you.

“ Be assured that I have forgiven, and almost forgotten, all the disagreeable things  
that

that passed at your house: it is to themselves that your friends have done the greatest injury, and I wish them to repair it as you have done. I am, dear young lady, your affectionate friend and servant,

“ F. DARNEFORD.”

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LIST OF BOOKS.

Madame de Lambert's Advice to a Son and Daughter.  
Mrs. Chapone's Works.  
Mrs. H. More's Sacred Dramas, and Search after Happiness.  
A Father's Legacy. By Dr. Gregory.  
A Father's Instructions. By Dr. Percival.  
The Ladies Preceptor.  
The Geographical Grammar.  
A Short History of England. Question and Answer.  
A Roman History. By Goldsmith.  
A Grecian History. By the Same.  
Theatre of Education. By Madame de Genlis.  
Tales of the Castle. By the Same.  
Fordyce's Sermons to Young Women.  
Mason on Self-Knowledge.  
Moore's Fables for the Female Sex.

Cotton's

Cotton's *Visions*.

*Telemachus*, in French.

*Cyrus*, in French.

*Spectators*, well translated into French.

*Sacred History*, selected from the *Scriptures*. By  
Mrs. Trimmer.

*The Bible*—A Chapter every Day.

*The Guardian*.

*The Rambler*. By Dr. Johnson.

*The Adventurer*. By Dr. Hawkesworth.

*The Idler*. By Dr. Johnson.

*Spectacle de la Nature*.

Mrs. Carter's Poems.

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"The first month I spent at Mr. Ilford's rolled away smoothly. The second, not so well. The third, Mrs. Ilford began to vent her ill humours upon me. I loved the children; they began to improve under my tuition: I took pleasure in their company; I hoped they would repay my cares, and that even their mother would be satisfied with them.

Mrs. Ilford generally found fault with them

them the whole time she staid in the room. If she could not see any thing in their behaviour, their cloaths bore the blame—a spot on James's cloaths, Anna had dirtied her frock, Ellen trod her shoe aside.

I heard her with the greatest composure. Even this displeased her: I did not pay regard enough to what she said.

I answered, that I had so high an opinion of her good sense, that, when her children were good in material points, she would not mind trifles.

“ What, then, Madam, do you think they are without faults ? ”

“ I think nobody is happier in promising children than you are, Madam. There is not one among them of which I should not be proud to be the mother.”

The children smiled upon me; the mother pouted, and left the room.

Another time, when she was making comparisons in favour of those to whom she was partial, I would not allow of them.

Did

Did I see no difference among them ?  
Were they all exactly alike ?

“ No, Madam; I do make some distinctions : I think Miss Ilford sometimes wants a check, and Miss Anna wants encouragement ; but that both of them will, under proper government, be good and amiable.”

“ So, Madam, you make a point of contradicting every thing I advance, in order to shew your superior judgment ! I ought to know my own children best ; what should hinder me ?”

“ Partiality blinds you, Madam. I am impartial, and will endeavour to do my duty to all of them.”

“ Do you dare to tell me that I am partial ?”

“ Yes, Madam, I dare : I heard so before I came hither ; but you have sense to correct yourself, otherwise I would not take this liberty. When you reflect upon the consequences of letting this appear to the children,

children, I hope and trust you will excuse me, and be convinced of my sincere attachment to all my pupils."

She flew into a passion, and said some rude things. I was calm, and made no reply. She recollected herself, grew cooler, and said, if she must not speak of the faults of her children, she must get a governess who knew the respect that was due to their mother.

I bowed—"Whenever you please, Madam, if you cannot bear with my sincerity."

She left me in anger.

When we met at dinner, I behaved as usual; and she recovered herself enough to treat me with civility; and, beside, she did not wish that her husband should take cognizance of the matter, well knowing he would decide against her.

Some time after, I made James read before his parents.

Mr.

Mr. Ilford took him in his arms, praised and caressed him.

“ You are very much improved, my boy; and are greatly obliged to your governess.”

“ Yes, papa, so I am, because she loves me, and speaks kind words to me; and then I strive all I can to do better.”

“ There, Madam, do you hear that?”

Mrs. Ilford frowned, and looked angrily at me.

“ What, then,” said her husband, “ are you sorry that your son is improved? I suppose you are, by your behaviour to Mrs. Darnford.—Well, then, Madam, I thank you for us both, and am delighted that my boy does so well.”

I took the children away, and left the parents to finish the scene.

Mr. Ilford spoke the truth. His wife was really displeased at the improvements of those children she did not love. She wanted

wanted the others to surpass them in all things ; and, though they did well, that was not sufficient. She accused me of putting them backward, and the others forward. She was unreasonable and unjust. She made my duty uneasy to me ; and I began to think of leaving her : yet my love for the children made me unwilling to part with them.

I sometimes dined with Mr. M—— on a Sunday. He was one of those old-fashioned men who dine early on that day, that their servants may attend the public worship of God, thinking their obedience to his laws the best security for those duties they owed to their masters. This suited me also ; for I held the same opinions with him.

One day, I met Mrs. Langston there ; and she was curious to know how I went on with Mrs. Ilford. She thought I staid longer than she expected. I told her, I  
had

had some thoughts of leaving her, and enquired whether she knew of any thing more eligible for me.

" Why, yes, I have heard of several; but I do not know whether they will suit you. There is old Mrs. Batson wants a companion; and there is Mrs. Gumm wants a governess for her daughters. I will enquire farther, before I recommend them to you, child. My maid is very intelligent: she finds out people's characters; she knows Mrs. Gumm's servant; she shall sift her well; and I will let you know the result as soon as I can."

When Mrs. Langston was gone, I said to Mr. M—— " I would give something, Sir, to know your opinion of that lady."

" Why, Madam, it is not very different from your own: but I find her of as much use as a newspaper; she knows every body, and every thing. Sometimes I want information,

information, and she gives it me : how she gets it, I know not ; but I seldom miss of obtaining from her the lights that I want relative to names, families, and characters. She has some good qualities, and has done service by her recommendations. She is a kind of nomenclator ; and I refer to her as I do to the Red-book."

" Do you think she is likely to be of any service to me, Sir ?"

" Not unlikely. Come and dine with me next Sunday ; and you shall hear what she says."

In the course of the week following, Mrs. Ilford had teased me almost out of patience. She wanted to get rid of me, but wished the motion to come from me. She found that Mr. Ilford had a good opinion of me, and was pleased with the children's improvements. If she dismissed me, he would not fail to blame her ; but, if I desired to leave the family, she fancied

fancied she could turn the blame upon me. The poor woman took more pains to do wrong, than it would have cost her to do right.

The next Sunday, I met Mrs. Langston again at Mr. M——'s. After the customary greetings, she took up the thread of her discourse, and run it off till she came to the end of the clue—

“ Well, my dear, I have been very diligent in making enquiries upon your account. I will begin with Mrs. Batson. She is old, and rich: so far is very well; but then, she is as covetous as Old Elwes. She loves nobody but herself: yet she loves good living, but will not let others have their share. She has sometimes a chicken, or a bit of fish; a single sole, or a flat fish of any kind; or half a pound of salmon, or any thing that is nice. Now; I will tell you the rest of her establishment—She keeps three maid-servants, and

two men; but the coachman is at board-wages, and lives with his family. She buys a quarter of mutton every week, and has it cut out into pieces as it is wanted; so they live upon mutton and mutton through the year. She has a large side-board of old-fashioned plate, which is set out every day, as if for a feast; but it serves only to put you in mind of good dinners, and create an appetite, without gratifying it. I dined with her one day, to meet a relation of us both: there were four of us; and I will tell you our dinner. At the top, a pair of soles—small ones they were too; at the bottom, a whole loin of mutton; on one side, three scollop-shells of potatoes, beat up with milk; on the other, an ordinary rice-pudding. After dinner, three bottles were set on the table; one was Madeira, the second Port, the third raisin-wine, made at home. When she is alone with her companion, she

drinks

drinks a pint of Madeira to her own share: and the companion drinks two glasses of raisin-wine; which, I dare say, is not a bit too good."

Mr. M—— laughed—"Where do you get intelligence of all these *minutiæ*?"

"No matter where: I warrant them true. I have not done yet. Mrs. Batson has a tolerable piece of ground, for a London garden. It is divided into two large beds, and a gravel-walk between them: one is full of cabbages, the other of potatoes; the borders are full of pot-herbs and onions. There is always either a large cabbage, or a dish of potatoes, at her table, to eke out the mutton; and the servants are not stinted in these articles. If she leaves any thing of the top dish, she gives it the companion; but she must not ask for it."

"Enough, enough of Mrs. Batson!"

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said Mr. M—— : “ let us hear no more of her.”

“ Yes, one trait more, and I have done : she expects her companion to sit with her all day, and to read her to sleep at night.”

“ Now I say *enough*, too,” said I. “ I will not be Mrs. Batson’s companion. I cannot bear to have my rest broken : the vexations of the day are sufficient for me.”

“ Well, I thought so,” said Mrs. Langston. “ The poor girl that has left her, is quite worn out, and sinking under it. For all this service, she gave her thirty guineas a year ; and she paid for her washing out of it.

“ I have got another character for you, as good as Mrs. Batson.”

“ Reserve it, then, till after dinner,” said Mr. M—— : “ it is ready by my watch.” He led us into the dining-parlour, and postponed our subject till tea-time.

When

When we returned into the drawing-room, Mr. M—— said—" Come, Madam, give us your other character ; but, pray, make it as brief as you can."

" Well, so I do always : I love brevity as much as any body. Mrs. Gumly is the wife of a cheesemonger ; not one of your tip-top folks, but a retail-dealer in butter and cheese."

Mr. M—— laughed—" Well said, Madam Brevity !"

" She had a few hundreds to her fortune, which made her husband's outset. She had an only brother, who went with a merchant abroad into Spain. He had abilities for business ; and behaved so well, that he succeeded his master, acquired a great fortune, died a bachelor, and left it to his sister, Mrs. Gumly. There is a story told briefly, I hope !"

" Very much so, Madam !—Proceed."

" This great fortune overwhelmed Mrs.

Gumly ; and, as it came by her, she took the lead, and the good man, her husband, marched under her command. They disposed of the shop immediately, hired a house at the west end of the town, bought a villa in the environs, and lived among the gentry. This good couple have two sons, and three daughters. The eldest son is sent over to Spain, to settle his uncle's affairs ; and with him a very clever young man, who understands business of every kind. The youth is thrown among men, and stands a chance to be one. The father does not want sense, and has judged rightly with regard to his son. There are three tall, gawky girls, whom the mother wants to have qualified for the new society they are to appear in. The eldest is full sixteen years old, ignorant, awkward, and vulgar. Mrs. Gumly had thoughts of sending them to school ; but the girls cried, and begged they might not go. She

was

was advised to take a gentlewoman into her family, to instruct the young ladies in all the forms of polite life ; and she thinks this the only knowledge worth acquiring. Mrs. Gummidge thinks fortune is given people in order to enjoy all the comforts and conveniences of life ; and this, she believes, consists in fine cloaths, good eating and drinking. She keeps an over-plentiful table, loaded with dainties of every kind, good wines and liquors of all kinds ; and thinks herself honoured, if the neighbouring gentry will partake of them. She admits no tradesmen's wives into her house : they must be *born gentry*, to be worthy of her notice. A person of quality transports her ; and she is ready to fall down and worship titles, pomp, and fortune. The husband insists upon being her steward, and keeping an account of their income and expences. By this prudent conduct, he will hinder her from out-running their

fortune : but she gives dinners and suppers continually ; and there are always people ready to run after her, and to flatter her vanity. She wants a person, as I have told you, to educate the young ladies, her daughters.—Now, my good Mrs. Darnford, what think you of this office ? I believe I have interest sufficient to introduce you, and get you accepted. You would live a life of ease and plenty ; and, I believe, she would be easily satisfied.”

“ I confess, Madam, that these advantages have no temptations for me. I wish the lady I am to serve, to be a judge of the duties of my office, and an eye-witness of the manner in which they are discharged. Ignorant people neither praise nor blame in the right place : it gives one neither credit nor satisfaction to serve them.”

“ Give me leave to say, you are very difficult, Madam. There are many people would catch at this last offer. You might do

do as you pleased ; and, by a little address, you might govern the whole family of Gumly."

" To those who wish to make advantage of the vanities and follies of others, such a situation might be desirable ; but I could not excuse myself for using such means of advancement."

" You are too scrupulous. Half the world live by the vanities, follies, and artificial wants, of others."

" That is true, indeed," said Mr. M—. " Mrs. Langston speaks like an Oracle."

" Would you, Sir, advise me to pursue this kind of conduct ?"

" Not if you mean to lay your sins at my door : I have enough of my own to answer for. Don't say, I advised you to act thus."

" Then, I am answered. I have a good mind to lay before you a proposal that has

been made to me lately; which I have a greater inclination towards than any of those you have heard."

"Come, tell us, then: I like to see the workings of your own honest mind."

"I am invited to open a school in a small country town, or perhaps in a village near it, where such a thing is much wanted."

"I do not consent," said Mr. M—, "to your running any hazard. Keep together the money you have got, and try to increase it."

"I think," said Mrs. Langston, "it would be descending too much. Surely, your present is a much genteeler employment."

"I had rather enjoy the comforts of life, than the vanities. I am tired of your genteel people: and think, by descending a step lower, I shall keep better company; that is, more rational people, who will be

more

more likely to do me justice. I have had no society, no communication of mind to mind, since I came last to London.

“Lady Haughton was too proud to converse with me: her children scoffed at and ridiculed me. Mr. Ilford I must not converse with, lest his wife should be angry with me for loving his children. Mrs. Ilford dislikes me, because I am not partial, like herself. Mrs. Langston has given me such information as is equal to an actual trial of the two families she has described. I am very much obliged to her, as much as if I had made the experiment.

“I read Shenstone’s School-mistress lately, and thought I could be contented to be like the good dame he describes: surely, it is better than to be a slave to the humours and follies of those in higher life. I never was ambitious, and am now sick of

the gaudy vanities and luxuries which are coveted by the many."

"I honour your virtues; but I think you are too humble. You are too young to give up the world as yet: try it a little longer; perhaps it may have some good in store for you, to make amends for the past."

"Aye, do, my dear," said Mrs. Langston; "wait a little longer, before you give up the town and the world, as Mr. M—— says. I will look farther, and try what I can do for you."

"I thank you, Madam: I am much obliged for your endeavours to serve me; and I will wait till I hear what your enquiries will produce."

Thus far my journal goes. The rest of our conversation, I suppose, was common, and uninteresting.

Mrs.

Mrs. Langston was shrewd and penetrating. She had a knack at painting characters, and gave a perfect idea of the persons she described. She knew a good deal of the world, and was too compliable with the ways of it: but she had some good qualities; and, where she liked, she was sincere: she was as severe to those she disliked, and they were the greater part of the world.

Mrs. Ilford shewed her bad temper more and more: but I resolved to wait till I should hear from Mrs. Langston; and, if she gave me no hope of a more eligible situation, to try what the country would do for me; and this was always my favourite scheme.

In a few days, I received a billet from Mrs. Langston, as follows—

“ DEAR MADAM,

“ LADY Mary Cormack drinks tea with me next Thursday. I desire you will meet her. She wants a governess for her two nieces, of whom I shall soon know more. She is said to be proud and stately, but has some good qualities. She is generous to indigent gentry, but has no charity for plebeians. She has heard a good report of you, and is desirous to know you. Pray, do not seal up your lips before you come; but speak, that she may *see* you, as one of the philosophers said: I forget his name. Believe me always

“ Your sincere friend and servant,

“ E. LANGSTON.”

Mrs. Ilford now began to play the tyrant: she teased me incessantly; she scrupled my going to Mrs. Langston's for an hour

hour or two. I told her, she must look out for another governess, for that my patience was exhausted.

She was surprized at my sincerity.—  
“ You reckon yourself well-bred, Madam: you give me such proofs as I did not expect.”

“ I am sorry, Madam, to be obliged to speak so plainly. It is painful to me to say disagreeable things; therefore I cannot contend with those to whom it gives pleasure.”

“ Meaning me, I suppose?—More proofs of your good-breeding!”

“ Good-breeding must give way to truth, Madam. I wish you may meet with a person endowed with many more requisites than I possess, and that your treatment may equal her merit; and then you may be happy together. Adieu, Madam: I am going to Mrs. Langston’s, and

will

will come back as soon as I can conveniently."

I curtsied to her, and left the room.

Lady Mary was all, and more than all, I had heard. She uttered her opinions freely, and wondered that people could be found that differed from them. She thought kings should be under no controul, and subjects were born to submit to every tax and oppression that could be laid upon them. In like manner, this fine doctrine was to descend, in gradation, to all the different ranks and degrees; every different one was to be kept within certain limits, which they were not to pass on any account. The nobility were a kind of demi-gods, who were to be worshipped by all the inferior ranks: the gentry to exert their superiority over their inferiors. Tradesmen were to be kept at an awful distance. Mechanics and servants were useful

useful in their places; which, in her system, were but little above the quadrupeds of the earth. The greatest crime, in her estimation, was for the nobility and gentry to intermarry with those of the lower orders; and she did not think even wealth a sufficient excuse for such degradation. She thought the common people were either rogues, cheats, or fools; and actually said, that servants in general were without common sense.

Mrs. Langston cast many arch looks at me, and made signs for me to reply.

Lady Mary applied herself to me, and seemed to expect my assent to all that she had said.

“ Come,” said Mrs. Langston, “ let us hear your opinion; I guess that it is not the same as Lady Mary’s, and therefore you are backward to declare it.”

“ You guess truly, Madam,” said I: “ but I do not wish to obtrude my opinions

nions in contradiction to her ladyship's; I am content to wear them in my own bosom."

" Oh, but I expect you to answer me," said Lady Mary: " for I think all the regulation, and the conduct, and the propriety of life, depend upon observing these subordinations; and, therefore, I should like to hear what can be said against them."

" I do not presume to speak against them," said I; " but I should wish to preserve a distinction that is superior to them. Degrees of subordination are necessary; I look upon them as such: but there are degrees of merit in every one of these, that are superior to every temporary distinction. The gifts of God are impartial and universal. Beauty, strength, understanding, every endowment that is truly valuable and respectable, are dispensed equally to all ranks and degrees of

men. Merit is not limited to any set of people, but is to be found every where. When I consider these truths, I learn to love and respect my fellow-creatures; not according to their birth, fortune, or station in life, but according to their degree of virtue and merit. There is a gentry, and a nobility, of God Almighty's making; and to them I bow down, and confess my inferiority: while to the temporary distinctions of men I pay only the external marks of respect, for the first I reserve the homage of my heart. It is not our virtue that gives us these temporary distinctions; it is not our fault to be without them: they serve, however, as a criterion of the hearts of those who possess them; and prove whether they are worthy of them, by the use they make of them towards those above and below them; and they are accountable for them both to God and to men."

" We

“ We have got a philosopher, Mrs. Langston. She speaks well, and there is something in what she says; but nothing that can set aside the distinctions of honour and gentility, and regulation and propriety.”

“ I do not wish, Madam, to set them aside; I only wish people to make a right use of them, and not to estimate them above their value.”

“ Education makes the great distinction: I hope you give that its just value?”

“ I do, Madam: but here I make a great distinction between external and ornamental accomplishments, and internal qualities, which may be called the education of the mind. The first are by no means to be neglected; but to the second the chief attention should be paid.”

“ You seem to set but little value upon the first; which shews the difference between

tween people of birth and breeding, and their inferiors."

" There your ladyship is right. These, indeed, are the chief distinctions: for human creatures are made of the same materials; they come all alike from the hand of the Creator, and are formed to manners and characters, by the various methods of education, and the examples of those with whom they live."

" So, Madam, you are, then, a leveller! All human creatures are equal, in your estimation?"

" I believe they are so in the sight of God; and I believe what his word says concerning them."

" Pray, do you think there is any difference in the breed of horses and dogs? or, do you think they are all naturally equal?"

" I think there *is* a difference; and I wish people in general were as attentive to the

the breeding of the human race, as they are to dogs and horses."

" You allow there is a difference: why not in the human species?"

" If the same attention was given to the human race, it might have some, but, I should think, not equal, effect. Much might be said upon this subject: I am not equal to the discussion of it. I will only ask your ladyship, whether you have not seen as many beautiful persons in the lower degrees of life, as in the highest? and, *vice versa*, as ordinary and ugly persons among the quality and gentry, as among the peasantry of the land?"

" In particular cases, I have; but not generally."

" That is fairly answered. Perhaps your ladyship may not have extended your observations sufficiently to decide this point; they may have been confined to those of your own rank in life."

" Perhaps

“Perhaps I may not. But I think it is best for people of quality to believe that it is so, for many reasons; particularly, that young people may not marry with their inferiors.”

“That is a reason of the first magnitude!”

Mrs. Langston and I both smiled, and looked at each other.

“You smile,” said Lady Mary. “You think it of no consequence?”

“To particular families it certainly is, but not to the public.”

“Very well, Madam. I should think it likely, that a person who held your opinions, might connive at a connection of this kind.”

“For myself, Madam, I can answer. I should be extremely concerned at a clandestine marriage in a family I was engaged in; and I should do every thing in my power to prevent it.”

Mrs.

Mrs. Langston said—"I dare say you would: I think I can answer for your honour and fidelity."

"Your opinions, however, I can by no means approve. They are such as have a tendency to overthrow those distinctions, that I consider as the basis of society; and your pupils might imbibe them."

"I should think it my duty to lead them to aspire to such virtues and principles, as should give them a real, and not an ideal, superiority."

"I should chuse they should have both: that they should support that pride of birth that becomes their station; and that honour, dignity, and propriety, should regulate their actions."

"I apprehend they are not inconsistent with the principles I avow."

"In my opinion, they are. I do not want my children to think every body their equals, nor to put themselves upon a level

level with them. No, Mrs. Darnford, you shall not have the care of them!"

" As your ladyship pleases. I do not wish it, unless you can approve of my principles; which I can never deny, nor be ashamed of."

" Very well, you may keep them to yourself: they will do for the lower kind of people; I dare say they will approve them."

" I hope so, Madam; for them I will reserve them."

" Upon my word, Madam, Mrs. Darnford has not done herself justice; she is qualified in all respects for the office she undertakes. Your ladyship desired her to speak upon this subject."

" Very true, Mrs. Langston; and she has shewn me her opinions. I am, indeed, obliged to her: I ought not to be offended."

" I certainly could not mean to offend  
your

your ladyship: I only answered your sentiments, as desired. I could have said much more, and expressed myself more strongly and decisively."

" Could you, indeed?—All is over with me; so you may now say what you please, and I will not be offended."

Mrs. Langston said—" I wish to hear some of your stronger arguments."

" I will only mention one or two, and them briefly."

" When we consider the infinite distance between the Creator and any of his creatures; and that he deigns to preserve, protect, and provide for them all; we conceive that no human creature can be degraded by an intercourse of humanity, and even friendship and affection with the lowest of his fellow-creatures; because no inequality, between man: and man, will bear any degree of comparison with that of the creature with it's Creator."

" That

“ That cannot be denied,” said Mrs. Langston.

Lady Mary was silent.

“ Nothing can do so much honour to a creature, as to resemble its Creator in such of his attributes as are imitable. When we raise and cherish our fellow-creatures, we most resemble our Creator.”

“ I agree to that, with all my heart and soul,” said Mrs. Langston.

“ So do I, in a degree,” said Lady Mary. “ I would contribute to the support of the lowest creatures, but I would not make them my companions.”

“ Not generally, Madam; no more would I: but, among those whom we call the lowest *human creatures*, there may be many whom *I should not disdain to make my companions* for their benefit and service.”

“ I would give them my money, but not my company!” said Lady Mary, disdainfully.

“ Now, Madam, I must beg your patience, while I affirm, that the Greatest Personage that ever honoured this world with his presence, chose his friends and followers out of this order of people.”

“ Who could that be?” said Lady Mary.

Mrs. Langston looked, as if surprized at my freedom with her ladyship.

“ Surely, I need not name Him!—It was HE, *who knew what was in man.*” [She seemed confounded.] “ He chose his Twelve Apostles from among them; and those who succeeded the Apostles, those who propagated the Gospel, and it’s doctrines, were plain, illiterate men. The rich and noble were passed by; and integrity of heart and manners were the qualities that were chosen in preference, to be the Instruments, in the hand of Heaven, to accomplish this great work. Their MASTER told them, that “ *God had chosen the foolish*

*things*

*things of this world, to confound the wise."*  
He enjoined humility and benevolence, as the characteristics of his religion, and enforced them by his own life and practice. I could recite many instances, very severe upon the rich, and the proud; but I forbear them, and only just mark the outline, and leave the rest to the memory and reflection of my hearers. I have done."

Lady Mary was silent some minutes. At length, she spoke—"Now, you have laid a heavy hand upon me, Mrs. Darnford: I feel it as much, or, perhaps, more, than I should have done from the pulpit; indeed, I feel it too much to reply to it. But, though what you have said is indisputably true, we are too much the slaves of custom, to obey in practice what we acknowledge in theory."

"Now, I acknowledge, in my turn, your ladyship's ingenuousness; and, in reply, I presume to say, that the practice of

all the Christian duties and virtues is consistent with the highest accomplishments which human nature can attain. I presume, also, that your ladyship would not wish that your children should reach them, at the expence of their Christian hopes and expectations."

" You judge me fairly, and truly; and yet, you have made me unsatisfied with you, and with myself. I find you too wise for me; we should not do well together. I am used to have people about me that submit implicitly to all my opinions and directions. I should be lowered in my own eyes, and in those of my young people. I shall, however, reflect upon all you have said, and I hope I shall be the better for it."

" Now, I trust, you are come fairly to a compromise," said Mrs. Langston; " and you will, at last, part with a good opinion of each other."

" I have

“ I have a very high one of your friend,” said Lady Mary; “ and I wish her success in life may be equal to her merits.”

Mrs. Langston complimented Lady Mary on her ingenuousness. We fell into conversation upon general subjects, and parted upon better terms than we met.

Mrs. Langston blamed me for speaking so freely; and said, there was no occasion to declare my principles. I answered—That, as I never deceived any body, I thought it right that we should understand each other before we came together; which was much better than that we should discover disagreeable things afterwards, and part in disgust and dislike—That Lady Mary began with me in so high a tone of pride and insolence, that I could not but reply; if I had not, she would have thought me of a base and abject disposition—That I should have dared to speak such truths as these before people

of the highest rank; and to say, with David—“ *I will speak of thy testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed.*”

“ I like your notions, I like your principles, but I could wish you to comply with the prejudices of people in upper life: let them pay for them, they well deserve it.”

“ That, Madam, is a point upon which I cannot agree with you. I cannot take advantage of their vanities and follies; I leave that to others that can.”

“ But, then, you must not associate with the better sort of people.”

“ Yes, I will. I will go a step or two lower, to find a better sort of people.”

“ Oh, fie upon your wit! I see you are incorrigible. Well, you must do as you please; but my good wishes will follow you.”

I took leave of Mrs. Langston, and returned to Mr. Ilford’s.

The

The family had supped, and were retired to their apartments. The servant who attended the children followed me into my chamber. She told me, that her master and mistress had had words together, and it was about me; that William heard his master say—" You will never get such another: I insist, that you shall ask her to stay, and that you treat her as she deserves." My mistress cried sadly, and went up stairs, to avoid seeing you, Madam; and I heard high words between them afterwards."

" Is this known to all the family?"

" No, Madam; only to Mrs. Nelson, Mr. William, and me."

" Then, pray, let it go no farther. I am determined to leave the family soon. I could not bear that the principals should differ upon my account."

" As to that," said the girl, " my mistress will always find something to make

her uneasy: she is never long pleased with any body."

"I am sorry to hear you say so. It becomes you to conceal the faults of those whose bread you eat, and not to expose them. Nobody is perfect. Perhaps, Mrs. Ilford is more to be pitied than blamed."

I sent the servant away, and went to my rest.

The next day, there was an altercation between Mr. and Mrs. Ilford, and myself.

Mr. Ilford blamed his wife, in severe terms, for her behaviour to me, and to every one before in my office. She was humbled, and seemed conscious of her fault. I said every thing that could excuse her to her husband. He urged me to stay; but my resolution was fixed, and I told him so. Would I stay till they could get another person? I could not promise that; I might be engaged within that time: but I would enquire for them, and let them know,

know, as soon as I should fix the time of my leaving London; for I intended to settle in the country.

After Mr. Ilford left us, Mrs. Ilford thanked me for excusing her to her husband. She owned, and lamented, her unhappy temper; and said, she should be sorry to part with me. I pitied her most truly; and said, I hoped, as she was convinced of her error, she would endeavour to correct it; and that my successor might find the good effects of it.

I dined at Mr. M——'s on the following Sunday. He and Mrs. Langston were never tired of laughing, and rallying me on my interview with Lady Mary Cormack.

"After all," said Mr. M——, "I believe we must make our friend wear the breeches, and get her ordained; for she preaches to a miracle; and she would soon be followed, and become popular."

“ Now, I must differ from you in opinion,” said Mrs. Langston. “ Her doctrine is too humiliating to become popular: she should offer something as a substitute for virtue, which requires too many sacrifices and labours; and hold out an infallible key, that will open a short way to heaven, without taking any pains for themselves. This is the way to be popular.”

“ I give up all the honours you offer me,” said I: “ I will no more preach, reason, or remonstrate, either to nobility or gentry. I am going to become a country school-mistress; and I shall be fully employed in discharging the duties of that office.”

They asked me, when I thought of leaving London. I said, very soon, but I had not yet fixed the time.

Mrs. Langston said—“ You must not go into the country till your charming month of May invites you. Leave Mrs.

Ilford

Ilford and her children; come and spend the remainder of your winter with me, who know how to value your company."

I thanked Mrs. Langston for her very kind invitation. Mr. M—— approved it: and said, he wished I might meet with something better within that time; for he did not heartily agree to my present scheme, and yet he could not heartily oppose it.

Mrs. Langston said, she had that in her eye, and should not lose sight of it.

I thanked my good friends for their solicitude for my happiness; but, in my heart, I embraced my own little rural scheme. I thought of a cottage upon a green; a few straggling houses in view; the parish-church at half a mile distance; a number of sweet children around me; a little maid, and a little dog, to attend and guard me; a rude paling round my house; a bit of garden, that I could

cultivate myself; and a thousand other comforts and conveniencies. I thought of it all the day, and I dreamed of it in the night.

Mrs. Langston made enquiry. She heard of a young woman, lately teacher at a boarding-school, and dismissed to make room for another person related to the principals. She recommended her to succeed me at Mr. Ilford's. I privately advised him to put Master James to a good school; which he did directly. The children wept at parting with me. The parents behaved with politeness; and Mr. Ilford paid me more than was due to me.

I left them, and went to Mrs. Langston's, where I spent a month idly, but not unpleasantly.

During this time, I called on my sister frequently. She received me coldly; and upbraided me with my weakness, in giving up my settlement. I told her, that I acted according

## SCHOOL FOR WIDOWS.

according to what I thought my duty ; and, was I again in the same situation, I should probably do the same. She said, that was defending my folly by obstinacy, and I deserved all that should follow.

I wished to find a friend in a sister ; but I sought in vain. I informed her of my intention to open a school in the country. She coldly wished me good success. She had four fine children ; two of each sex : my heart yearned towards them ; but they were not permitted to be acquainted with me. It gave me pain to be so received ; and, at length, I gave over calling on them.

I wrote to Mrs. Moyle, desiring her to let her friend know, that I should soon come into the country ; and that I intended to open a school, as she had advised, and I would be with her next month.

Mrs. Langston was a smart little woman, turned of fifty, very active and alert. She lived in Clarges Street, Piccadilly. She had

had a key to the Green Park, in which she walked every day when the weather would permit.

She used to walk till she was tired, and then sit down upon a bench, and observe all the people that passed, as in review, before her. She would give me the history of most of them ; and never seemed so happy as when she was thus engaged.

There was a good deal of acuteness in her remarks, but they were chiefly on the left-handed side : I took the liberty to tell her so. She laughed, and said, those were the least mistaken who remarked upon what was wrong ; for that most of the apparent good qualities were put on to answer purposes to themselves, and to deceive others.

“ Then, Madam, I wish to be deceived as long as I live.”

“ Pho, sho !—You are not deceived : you only fancy so. You can see as clearly as I do. I was pleased to see you take  
down

down that saucy woman of quality ; only, for your own sake, I wished you could have condescended to flatter her vanity : you might have lived in affluence ; and you and I might still have laughed in our sleeve.—Oh ! but you have scruples about it !—Well, “ I will laugh where I must,” as Pope says ; and you may look grave, if you please.”

“ But Pope says likewise, that we should “ be candid where we can.”

“ Well, so I am, sometimes, where I cannot help it.”

I shook my head : she laughed at me. More company came forward : she began a new history, which lasted till a new subject came up to us.

Mrs. Langston was too familiar with her servants. Though I contend for the natural equality of human creatures, I do not hold it wise to do this : we expose to them all our weaknesses ; and they either

either ridicule, or take unfair advantages of them. We ought to be gentle and kind to them ; but it is seldom that we can make them our confidants with prudence and safety.

Mrs. Langston's motive of confidence was an insatiable curiosity : her servants were her spies ; they were daily picking up stories of their neighbours ; their mistress gave too much attention to them, and thus was supplied with intelligence.

She kept two maids, and one manservant, or rather boy, and used to talk to him all the time he waited at dinner and supper. My eye reproved her, I suppose ; for she replied to it's remarks.

" I can manage boys," she said : " but men are stubborn things ; I will have none of them."

" Do you not put yourself in the power of this boy's tongue?" said I : " may he

not

not report to others what he tells to you ? Boys are not naturally discreet, Madam."

" A fiddlestick ! I can keep him in order well enough : he finds a good mistress of me, and will not get a better easily. The rogue knows when he is well, I warrant you. I do not expect my servants to have a disinterested attachment to me : it is all cant and nonsense. I feed them well, and pay them well ; and they serve me well, in return. I seldom change : my maids all marry away ; and, if my boys behave well, I put them to a trade when they grow to be men. This is my method ; and I have not found any reason to repent it."

We walked constantly in the Park every morning. We saw company in the afternoon. There was another source of intelligence : people knew Mrs. Langston's turn, and they brought her fresh supplies frequently. She read the daily papers,

and

and commented upon them : they were her study, and she exercised her faculties in remarking upon them. On Sundays, she went to church in the morning, and sent her servants in the afternoon. She dined at Mr. M——'s, and returned home to supper. Once a month, she hired a coach, and returned all her visits. This was her manner of life, which she seldom altered or varied.

One day, as we were sitting on a bench in the Green Park, Lord A—— passed by us. He caught a glimpse of me ; he turned his head, and looked again. He soon came back ; he stared rudely at me ; then looked at my companion, and again walked away.

“ That is Lord A——,” said Mrs. Langston. “ Oh, you know him, I perceive ! ”

I was confused and uneasy. I dreaded her curiosity, and her sarcastic turn.

“ Yes,

“ Yes, Madam, I know him too well: he was my husband’s companion, and called himself his friend; but he led him into expences, and bad company, and was one of the causes of his ruin. Let me return home: the sight of him gives me painful reflections.”

“ You ought to look *him* out of countenance, and not he *you*. Sit a little longer: I will go with you presently.”

Two genteel men passed by us, in earnest conversation. As they drew near, I perceived one of them to be Mr. Wilmot, who was a visitor to the Framptons, at Darnford Hall.

A second confusion seized on me. I held down my head, that I might not be known. He passed me without notice.

I told Mrs. Langston, I was not well, and wished to be at home. She rose, and leaned upon my arm. In our way to the door, Lord A—— passed us a third time.

time. There was a smile of contempt upon his countenance. I was glad to retire from his observation. We went home directly; and, as I entered the house, I saw Lord A—— in the street, walking slowly. He passed the house, soon after we entered the parlour, unnoticed by Mrs. Langston. I soon recovered from my sickness, which was entirely owing to my confusion.

I resolved to leave London as soon as possible. I heard not of any situation more likely to suit me than those I had tried; and I resolved to see whether the country would not render me happier.

When I dined with Mr. M—— the Sunday following, I declared my resolution to leave London in the course of the week.

He gave me his kind advice, and paternal admonitions—“ Do not hazard your little pittance in any great undertaking.

Do

Do not take a share of any other person's school: partnerships are dangerous, unless you are perfectly acquainted with the temper and qualities of the person you engage with. Hire a lodging ready-furnished: let it be a genteel one; that may give you some credit. Ask a handsome price, such as may pay you for your trouble. You shall not keep a dame's school, like Shenstone's, though you use the poetical licence in describing it; but such as may induce the principal people in the place to send you their children. Let me know how you go on, as often as may be convenient; and my best wishes and services will always attend you."

Mrs. Langston shewed concern at the thoughts of losing my company, and invited me to visit her in my winter vacation.

I thanked them for the good offices I had received from them both, and promised

mised to acquaint them with my good or ill fortune.

I called on my sister, and bade her adieu; on Miss Beliza Haughton; on Mrs. Ilford. This last regretted my departure, and wished me to return to her. I was convinced that her temper was unalterable, and feared it might spoil my own.

A friend of mine wrote the following distich on this subject—

“ The sullen gives you pain ; the angry smart ;  
“ But, 'tis the teazer, only, breaks the heart.”

I resolved to keep mine whole, and to promote the peace of others.

I sent Mrs. Langston's servant to take a place for me in the coach. The evening before, I felt, for the first time, a kind of petty distress, at going by myself to the inn, and to sleep there alone. Imagination called

called up a thousand terrors, and set them in battle array before me.

I called on Reason to support me, and to vanquish these ideal enemies—Was I not in England, in London, whither so many people come every day, to do their business, upon which their livelihood depended! This fear was a weakness that must be conquered, arising from false indulgencies, and being constantly attended by others.

I resolved to overcome it, and I did. The same method pursued, will always succeed!

I slept three hours at the inn; I then rose, and made myself ready for the coach. I went in it to J——, and from thence, in a stage-cart, to Mr. Moyle's, where I found myself an expected and welcome guest.

I staid there a week; during which time,

time, Mrs. Moyle wrote to her friend, Mrs. Sorling, the farmer's wife whom I have mentioned. She received an answer, recommending me to Mrs. Bailey, at the White Hart, at W—.

I went there the following week, and took lodgings with Mrs. Martin. You know all that passed there; and I now unite the foregoing part of my story with your account, which is told very much to my advantage.

I wait to hear from my friend, to hear all that has befallen her, and to know how much further her curiosity extends. I do not refuse to gratify it, if she desires it; but I am impatient to know every circumstance that concerns her.

When I have read your pacquet, I will prepare to answer it. I am in hourly expectation of that, and my other adopted daughter, Betsy Moyle: she, Patty Mar-

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tin, and Charlotte Brady, are as my own children.

With every sentiment of friendship and affection, I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

FRANCES DARNFORD,

VOL. II. E LETTER I

Yours

## LETTER VII.

MRS. STRICTLAND, TO MRS. DARNFORD.

**I** Cannot write like you, nor make fine similies, nor metaphors ; but, in the plain and simple language of the heart, I will say, that nothing can be more welcome than your letters to me.

Oh, my friend ! how much have you suffered ! how steadily have you persevered in the path of rectitude and honour, in spite of allurements on one hand, and discouragements on the other !—Yes, you are the heroine ; and I am ashamed to mention my trials, which seem light (though I once thought them very heavy) in comparison with yours : yet, you desire to know my past conduct ; and, perhaps, it may be necessary for me to relate them, in order to vindicate myself, in your eye, for speaking disrespectfully of my husband.

You

You know that I lost both my parents in my childhood. My guardians were men of prudence and œconomy: they sought for a man of the same character, to whom they might transfer their charge; and thought that, in giving me to such an one, they had discharged their whole duty.

They recommended Mr. Strictland to me, as a young man of uncommon prudence and sobriety; one who would increase my fortune, while others were spending and dissipating theirs.

He kept a large farm in his own hands, and cultivated his lands to good account. He studied agriculture, and made improvements in it beyond any of the farmers who surrounded him. They ridiculed him; but, like the Athenian miser of old, he clapped himself, while others hissed him.

The idea of a farm did not displease me. I admired the poetical descriptions of a

rural life, and thought the wife of a shepherd must be a happy creature.

Mr. Strictland was a healthy, rosy-faced, well-looking man ; very plainly dressed ; not a trait of the gentleman about him : he looked like a decent farmer, dressed in his Sunday cloaths. There was nothing to attract, nothing to disgust one.

I had no bias towards any other man : I thought I could like him as well as any other lover ; and, after I had engaged myself to him, I gave him the preference that was due to a husband.

His father was a miller, a mealman, and a farmer. He acquired a good fortune, and brought his son up with his own ideas and sentiments. Knowing his birth and education, I ought to have made allowances : perhaps, I did not, so much as I ought ; if so, you shall be my confessor, and enjoin me a penance equal to my offences.

I married

I married Mr. Strictland without any reluctance, and without passion: I had none of those violent emotions that make so great a figure in poetry and romance. I had a preference towards my husband, and I resolved to fulfil my duty: I aspired to nothing higher than a state of tranquillity.

Mr. Strictland had shewn many indications of a mean and sordid mind during the time of his courtship to me; but they were either concealed, or smoothed over, so that I took no notice of them.

On the evening before my wedding-day, as we were drinking our tea at my guardian's, Mr. Wotton's, Mr. Strictland was called out, and told, his servant desired to speak with him. Mr. Wotton followed him, and they staid out some time. Mrs. Wotton sent the footman to tell them their tea would be cold: they sent word, they should drink no more.

They went through the hall, and into the garden.

I heard Mr. Wotton say—"I tell you, Sir, it is d——d shabby of you ; I do, and will resent it!"

Strictland spoke low ; and they were soon out of hearing.

Mrs. Wotton and I sat in surprize what could be the matter.

They did not come in till the lawyers came, and they were called in to sign the marriage articles. They seemed then to be friends ; but Mr. Wotton's countenance wore marks of anger, though subdued.

I knew not the cause of this till some years afterwards ; but I relate it now, as a trait of my husband's character, that prepares you to expect all that follows.

Mr. Strictland kept a chaise-cart, that served to carry his butter, fowls, and pork, to the next market-town, one day in the week, and carried home articles for the

use

use of the family. It carried sometimes himself, and sometimes his servant, to country markets, with samples of corn, and other articles of his business: in short, it was of great service to him, both as a chaise and as a cart. This vehicle he had new painted green, and ordered his servant to bring it to my guardian's house, intending to carry his bride home in it. Mr. Wotton expected to have seen a new and genteel carriage, and was shocked at the sight of this family convenience. He told Mr. Strictland, it was a shame, that a man with fifteen hundred a year, and several thousands in the funds, who was going to marry a girl with near six thousand pounds in her pocket, should think of carrying his wife home in a cart. He was very angry, and was not soon appeased. They talked it out in the garden: he made Strictland ashamed of his meanness. He pacified him, by saying, he waited to see

the event of the Bill then before the House of Commons, and whether they would lay a tax upon the chaise-carts ; and, as soon as that was decided, he would buy a chaise; that, in the mean time, he would keep me a saddle-horse. He desired him to say, that the cart came for my baggage ; and he would hire a post-chaise to carry me home. They had just settled this point when they were called in to sign the articles.

The next day, we were married. We dined at Mr. Wotton's, and went home in the afternoon. It was five and twenty miles to Mr. Strictland's house ; the roads very indifferent ; my spirits depressed ; and I wept several times, but concealed it as well as I could.

My husband's conversation was chiefly on his own superlatives. His house was an old one ; and he liked it the better, for he hated every thing that was fashionable. The furniture was old, and he preferred it

to more modern. His father purchased the estate, and the old mansion was thrown into the scale. It was supposed, that he would pull it down, and build a new one : but, as it was strong, and in good repair, he had no such intentions ; for, he believed, it would outlast two modern-built ones. He had an old housekeeper, who had lived with him and his father ever since the death of his mother : she was an industrious and faithful servant, and overlooked all the others. He went on, describing every servant, and their offices.

I found, he kept only two maid-servants beside ; one of whom was dairy-maid ; the other, cook ; and both were house-maids occasionally : but I perceived there was nobody to wait upon me.

When I first saw the house, my heart sunk within me : I thought of all the haunted houses I had ever heard or read of—An old brick mansion, with Gothic

windows, with square panes diamond-wise, and plaster divisions in the windows; a large porch in the center, with a seat on each side, and an iron balcony over it.

“ You are welcome to my house ! ” said my husband ; and saluted me so that his servants might have heard him. He then gave a loud whistle ; and a parcel of clowns came out, and offered their services. They were followed by an old woman with a sharp pair of eyes, and her nose and chin were like nut-crackers : she curtseyed, and bade me welcome home.

“ Here, Mrs. Gilson ! I have brought home your mistress : do you shew her the way to her apartment, while I give some orders to the servants.”

She had a small candle, in a flat candlestick, that gave a winking light, to discover a large, gloomy hall, paved with black and white marble in squares, with old oaken wainscot ; and the Twelve Cæsars

frowned

frowned upon me all around : a large open chimney, adorned with carvings in wood, of frightful grotesque figures, and foliages of various kinds. The furniture was suitable : large wooden chairs, rudely made ; and oaken tables at each end.

I just took a cursory view of these antiquities, and followed Mrs. Gilson up the great staircase, which was good old wainscot ; and the stairs were rubbed brown, and polished highly, so that you might chance to fall down them, without taking great care how you stepped.

When we came to the top, we entered a long gallery, out of which were doors into the bed-chambers, which were separated ; and every one had a small dressing-room adjoining—Old-fashioned beds, almost up to the cieling, with tassels of various colours.

Mr. Strictland's apartment was really the most comfortable-looking room I saw.

There was a dressing-room next it, which, I was told, was for my use. The chairs were modern; but there was an old toilette-table, with a petticoat of point lace; the looking-glass in a black japan frame, and boxes of the same.

I adjusted my hair, and set myself in readiness to go down, when I heard Mr. Strickland's voice upon the stairs, calling me to supper; to my surprize, for it was not yet eight o'clock.

I met him in the gallery, which was full of pictures, that looked as if they were taken out of Noah's Ark. All together, they struck me with a sensation of fear, though I knew not why, unless that they looked like the ghosts of the former inhabitants of the venerable mansion; and I feared to be left alone with them.

“ Pray, Sir,” said I, “ are these the portraits of your ancestors?”

“ No, my dear; they belonged to the family

family of whom my father purchased this estate : they are very ancient ; they serve to cover the walls as well as any thing else ; I seldom look at them. Come, supper waits for you."

He led me down stairs, and into the common parlour, where the cloth was laid. And here a new surprize awaited me. Five different dishes were brought in by as many servants, in order that every one might stare at his new mistress, while she was gazing at the plentiful supper. At the top, a pair of chickens boiled ; at the bottom, a great loin of pork ; on one side, a very large plumb-pudding ; on the other, a dish of potatoes ; and, in the middle, a huge buttered apple-pye.

I stared at the supper. Mr. Strictland said—" We do not often cook a joint of meat for supper ; but this is wedding-night, and I give my servants a treat, and I tap a hogshead of beer that is a year old next month.

month. The chickens are designed for you, Madam, and I hope you will do them justice."

I was not in an eating or a drinking humour; yet I affected both. I saw that my gentleman expected a cheerful compliance with all his commands. I tasted his October, and his made wines ; and was in a fair way to be tipsy, when Mrs. Gilson came in, and offered to attend me to my apartment.

Here ends the history of my wedding-day.

Mr. Strictland took upon him the *master* from the first minute I entered his house: he never asked me, whether I chose to do this or that, but he commanded me to do so or so.

The honey-moon is said to be generally happy; mine was spent in fear and trembling. I feared the house, the master, and every thing around me.

Mrs.

Mrs. Gilson saw my situation, and pitied me. She gave me the best advice, and encouraged me to look forward.

"I see, Madam," said she, "that this house is not much to your liking. Pray do not let my master perceive it; he is partial to his house, and proud of it; endeavour to like it, and, in time, you will be used to it. He will be gratified by your compliance with his humour: he is particular, but he has many good qualities, and he will improve upon farther acquaintance; but he will not bear any kind of opposition. I have lived with him a long time, and he is a good master to me, and, indeed, to all his servants, and I hope he will prove a good husband."

"I hoped, Mrs. Gilson, that he would have made some distinction between his wife and his servants; he speaks to me as if I was one; nay, he speaks, generally, as if he was angry."

"That

“ That is only his way, Madam; do not mind it: he loves you, I am sure; and, when you know each other’s good qualities, you will do them justice. Let me beg you to appear cheerful, and to seem pleased with every thing.”

“ I thank you for your kind and well-meant advice; I shall endeavour to profit by it. I am truly sensible of your merit, and I thank Heaven for sending me so sensible and discreet a servant!”

“ I thank you, Madam: as far as my poor ability extends, you may depend on every thing that can contribute to your happiness.”

“ I do find, already, that your goodness abates the horrors of my prison.”

“ Dear Madam! how strongly have you expressed yourself! You do not yet know what you call a prison: you seem afraid to walk out of one room into another!”

“ Very true, Mrs. Gilson, and so I am.

am. This house resembles all the haunted places I ever heard of. Pray, is it not haunted; or, at least, reported so?"

" Dear heart, Madam! you have too much good sense to believe such idle stories!"

" Not I, indeed. I could believe any thing you could tell me of it."

" Then I shall take care of what I do tell you. Come, Madam, permit me to shew you the rest of the house. My master is in the fields with his workmen; he will not be at home till dinner-time: let us go over the ground-floor; you have not yet seen the best rooms."

I followed her down stairs, into the great hall I have already described. There were two doors at each end. On the right-hand, one into the common parlour, and one into a passage which led into the kitchen and offices. On the left-hand, two more, exactly opposite to the others; which

which opened into three parlours in the other wing of the house.

They were large, dark, and gloomy; old wainscot, in small pannels; with old high-backed chairs and tables, to match the rest of the furniture.

The third was, indeed, a large and well-proportioned room, and handsomely furnished in a suitable style. The chairs were covered with a rich damask silk, with stuffed backs and bottoms; the window-curtains the same, and both fringed with a silk fringe of the same colour; a very large looking-glass, in a Japan frame, ornamented with a gold foliage; the tables of the same; on each side the great table, two high stands for candles, of the same japanned work.

But the principal ornaments of this drawing-room were some very fine portraits that hung around it; two of which made so strong an impression upon my

mind,

mind, that nothing could ever erase it ; and I can at any time bring them before me. One was a gentleman in armour, except his head ; his helmet lay upon a table beside him ; he seemed about the age of thirty ; his look expressed dignity, virtue, and complacency ; he looked like the patron and protector of all that had need of his assistance. The lady, on the other side the great glass, was somewhat younger, and exquisitely beautiful—and, to my fancied sight—

" Love, sweetness, goodness, in her aspect shin'd

" So clear, as in no face with more delight ! "

MILTON.

She was dressed richly, in embroidery on a white ground, which seemed to rise above the ground, so that you might take it off with your hand. Her neck and arms were adorned with pearls, and her dress trimmed with them. I gazed on these two charming pictures till the tears gushed

from

from my eyes, and I felt as if I was soliciting their protection.

"Oh, my dear Madam!" said Mrs. Gilson, "what is it that affects you so?"

"It is those divine portraits; they are another and different race of people from those I am obliged to converse with. I feel as if I was hardly worthy to be their servant; yet I could offer them my service, if they would deign to accept it."

"You are very fanciful," said she; "but I have heard say that they are very fine, and your behaviour convinces me of it."

"Yes, they are more than fine; I could almost worship them. But, pray, Mrs. Gilson, can you tell me who they are?"

"Why, they were some of the gentry that were formerly owners of this estate. There are boxes full of papers, in some of the upper rooms, that make mention of the

the names of many of them; particularly three, that old Mr. Strictland said were of very ancient and noble families. One was Montfort, that were once Barons of the land; another was Roscelin; and the third was *Marney*, if I remember right."

" All noble and ancient names, Mrs. Gilson; but I wish to know these, that I might honour them."

" To my thinking, you have paid them honour sufficient.—But, pray, Madam, cast your eyes upon the prospect from these windows, and then tell me whether that is not a fine look-out; lay prejudice aside, and see whether it deserves to be despised?"

" No, indeed, it may well be admired!"

" Well, then, I hope you can find something to be liked in this house?"

" This is a fine room, and well furnished: nevertheless, I confess, I should find more comfort in a modern room of

half

half the size, furnished only with deal tables and rush-bottomed chairs—but this is only to you, Mrs. Gilson. I will endeavour to like the house; and I shall visit this room often, for the sake of its inhabitants.”

Mrs. Gilson conducted me back to the hall, and went after her business; and I prepared to attend my lord and master at dinner, at one o'clock.

It was his custom to rise at six, and go into the fields; he came in to breakfast at eight, he dined at one, drank tea at five, supped at eight, and went to bed between nine and ten o'clock.

If his meals were not ready exactly to his time, his voice was heard to resound through the house: but his servants were generally very punctual.

I made an excuse for not going to church the first Sunday; but there was no excuse

excuse that could be admitted for the second.

I asked where I was to get one to dress my hair? I was told there was no such person in the village. I said, I was used to have a servant to attend me, and to dress my hair. My husband told me, he liked my hair best as Nature had dressed it; and as to other folks, it did not signify whether they liked it or not—Mrs. Gilson would attend me as well, or better, than a young girl.

I was forced to dress myself, and make a virtue of necessity. I found we were to be trundled along in the chaise-cart; so I dressed accordingly.

An awkward boy, one of the under-servants, ran before us to open the gates: he had a green cape put upon his coat, which, I suppose, his master intended as an apology for a livery.

Thus attended, we made our appearance

ance at church ; and you will easily believe that my mind was not elevated by pride or vanity on the occasion. Perhaps, a state of humiliation might be more proper, and more suitable to the duties I was to pay, as they were free from parade or ostentation.

After the service was ended, the worthy rector, Mr. Elton, and his wife, came up and paid us their compliments. Mr. Strictland answered for us both.

Mr. Elton said, that he and his family intended to wait on us in the afternoon to tea, if agreeable.

Mr. Strictland said he should be glad to see them. Poor *I* was an insignificant monosyllable, that had no kind of meaning.

We got into our chaise-cart, and trundled home again.

I asked Mr. Strictland which room I should receive company in ?

" Why, in the common parlour, to be sure.

sure. I have never used them since I was master of them. However, you may sit in one of them, if you have a mind. But the evenings grow cold now; and, I think, the common parlour is most comfortable."

I agreed that it was so, as I found a fire was not to be mentioned.

In the afternoon they came; and, soon after, a Mr. and Mrs. Southgate, a gentleman farmer, who lived at the distance of a mile. He was Mr. Strictland's most intimate friend: I say, *most intimate*, because he sometimes consulted him in the way of business; for, in reality, he had no ideas of friendship or intimacy, but thought all pretensions to them proceeded from interested motives.

He had lived alone in the world, and all his views were centered in himself; and he married to perpetuate the idea of *self* in a race of his own.

Mr. and Mrs. Elton solicited our ac-

quaintance; they hoped we should be good neighbours; half a mile was a short walk in the country, and they wished to see us very often.

I bowed, and looked at Mr. Strictland. He was silent.

By their looks to each other, I saw that they were no strangers to his character.

Mrs. Elton said, she had two daughters about my age; they longed to find a neighbour in me, and she hoped I should find them worthy of my friendship. Mr. Strictland and Mr. Southgate talked of their crops and their managements. Mrs. Southgate was silent and acquiescent.

Mr. Southgate mentioned a chaise to be sold at the squire's in the next parish, and he had some thoughts of buying it; but he, like Mr. Strictland, waited to see whether the chaise-carts were to be taxed or not.

Mr. Elton said, they need not to doubt of that,

that, for they certainly would; but, whether that were so or not, ought to make no difference to Mr. Strictland, for his fortune set him above such considerations.

He shook his head.

“ Why, Sir, people of less than half your fortune keep carriages!”

“ Well,” said he, laughing, “ do not I keep carriages enough?”

“ No, Sir; you want one more, for the use of your lady.”

“ All in good time, Sir. There are many people that set up carriages, and lay them down again: I should not like to be one of those.”

“ No fear of that,” said Mr. Southgate; I wait till yours comes out, before I presume to let mine appear. I only aspire to a one-horse chaise; but yours ought to be a post-chaise, and that of the handsomest kind.”

“ Thank ye, my good friends, for your generosity in my behalf. I hope you will keep it for me.”

I need not tell you who said this.

Their remarks shewed me the opinion they had of my husband; and he was so gratified by their compliments to his wealth, that he forgave their advice and implied reproofs to him.

Several other respectable farmers, and tradesmen in the parish, wished to visit Mr. Strictland and his bride—but here his pride, ever the companion of meanness, shewed itself.

The first man that called on him, he received in his kitchen, and asked him to drink some of his October; but never asked him into the parlour, nor offered to introduce him to his wife. This man was affronted: he made his report to the rest, and they all resented it; but knew not whether

whether it was Mr. or Mrs. Strictland that had rejected their acquaintance, and threw them to such a distance.

Mr. Strictland was in no hurry to return the first visits. I took the liberty to remind him that such visits were always returned early. He said, he would do it for once; but he did not mean to be always receiving and paying visits; he had something else to do.

I was pleased with Mr. and Mrs. Elton, and their family, and wished to cultivate their friendship. The two eldest daughters were charming girls: to cultivated minds they added that simplicity of manners, more engaging than all the factitious accomplishments of upper life. My heart felt the attraction; and I longed to be intimate with them; to make them my companions; to have them work, read, walk, and converse with me, and to form a little select society: but I dared not hope that my

monarch would allow me so much liberty. However, I resolved to have a trial or two, before I gave it up entirely.

It was a month, at least, before I had seen the whole of my territories; I mean, my husband's; for I had no power over, or in them. When Mrs. Gilson had leisure, she shewed them to me; for I had not the courage to go over them alone.

There was a suite of bed-chambers over the best parlours, furnished in the same antique style; the last, over the drawing-room, was furnished with crimson velvet, but in a forlorn and tattered state: there were some pictures in it worthy of notice; particularly one of an old lady that looked very cross, but well painted.

“ I will not chuse this for my bed-chamber, Mrs. Gilson; that old lady looks as if she would bid me get out of it.”

“ Good Lord, Madam! what strong notices you take of every thing!”

“ So

“ So much the worse for me: if I neither liked nor disliked strongly, I should be a much happier creature.”

“ Do not dislike us, Madam. I do not despair of seeing you very happy here.”

“ Ah, my good woman! I wish I could believe or hope so!”

She shewed me many odd places, nooks, and closets, that had not been looked into for many years. I felt glad when I got through them, and went down a pair of stairs that brought me into a passage that led to the kitchen and offices one way, and the other into the great hall.

I told Mrs. Gilson, I was glad to get out of that apartment.

She smiled—“ One would think, you knew by inspiration all that has been said of it.”

“ Tell me,” said I, “ tell me all.”

“ Why, some silly people have said,

that it is, or was, haunted; and others, as silly, have believed them."

" I should be one of the last sort: I thought of it all the time I was there. Can you tell me any thing more?"

" That old lady you observed, Madam—"

" Walks out of her frame at midnight, constantly, does she not?"

" You make me laugh; but I am glad to see you so pleasant. They say, she walks through these rooms every night, and shuts the doors hard after her."

" Oh, I believe it all; but I shall never go there to be convinced of it. If your master wishes to get rid of me by a short way, he need only shut me up one night with that old lady, and she will dispose of me before the morning."

" Good God! what a thought! I wish you loved my master well enough to believe,

lieve, that he studies to do every thing to promote your happiness."

" I wish I could believe it. However, you may see that I have a very good opinion of you, or I should not have spoken so freely. I will try to love the house, and it's master; but it depends upon him to bring it to pass."

We went over the offices, which were large, neat, and convenient; and I returned to my own apartment, thankful that it was really the most habitable and comfortable of any in the whole house.

One day, Mr. Strictland led me over his grounds; he shewed me some very agreeable prospects; his grounds were, as I have since understood, in high cultivation, well fenced, and neatly kept. I was no judge of this; but I praised and admired as much as I could, sometimes in the wrong place, and sometimes in the right.

He seemed pleased with me and himself;

so I took the opportunity of asking leave to invite an old friend and school-fellow, *Frances Lawson* by name, to come and spend some time with me.

He puckered up his face into a thousand wrinkles—"No, Madam; I do not approve of it."

"And why, Sir?"

"Because I do not like female friends and confidants: they often make differences between man and wife; and I wish my wife to have no other friend and confidant than myself."

I said no more. He frowned, and grew sulky; and we had little more conversation of any kind on our way home.

I asked him, whether he could play picquet?—"No."

"Cribbage?"—"No."

"Backgammon?"—A very loud "No." I shrunk into myself, and was silent.

Another time, I urged him to keep me a servant

a servant to attend me : he thought Mrs. Gilson was good enough to wait on me. I said, she was too good, and that I scrupled to let a person of her years and merit wait on me ; beside, she had business enough upon her hands, without this addition. He did not like a fine-lady servant in his house.

“ No more do I, Sir ; I want only a cleanly and humble girl about me. I have always been used to have a servant to myself ; and I did not expect that my conveniences would be lessened by marrying a man of your fortune.”

“ I will consider of it ; but I don’t like it—I tell you, I don’t like it.”

“ That may be a reason to you, Sir ; but it is none to any one else.”

“ May be so : but I am the person to judge of that ; and what I like, is, and shall be, the law in this house.”

“ Alas for me ! I find it so to my for-

row!—You are more despotic than the king of France."

He swore a great oath, and went out of the room, muttering, that he was, and would be, the master in his own house.

I fretted sufficiently, as you may suppose. He saw me in tears ; but they had no effect on him.

Oh, Frances ! your husband could not bear to see you weep ! A good-natured man cannot see the woman he loves weep, unmoved ; but an ill-natured one will chide her for that grief which his harshness and cruelty have occasioned. Let every woman take care to know the temper of the man she marries. Of all the requisites, let good-nature be the first ; it is the basis upon which woman must build her happiness : I have paid dear for my experience.

I was naturally of a cheerful temper. There is a happy elasticity in the human mind,

mind, that bends like a bow under the hand of Tyranny ; but, as soon as that force is withdrawn, it recovers it's strength, and returns to its original state : so my mind rose, at times, and resisted the affronts it received.

I had heard of women who had dared to oppose their husbands ; of those who had gained the victory over them ; and of those who had assumed the reins of government, and ruled over their husbands. The latter I detested : I wished for nothing more than a kind and gentle master, who would indulge my reasonable demands, and check me in what was improper and unreasonable.

Mr. Strictland used to go to a market-town three miles off, and to a club there every Wednesday, and did not come home till ten, or sometimes eleven o'clock.

I asked his permission to invite one of the Miss Eltons to spend the day with me,

during

during his absence. He answered, frowningly—"No!" he did not like female goffips.

"I never supposed that you meant to shut me up here, and debar me from all society."

What did I mean by society?

"What you and every body else mean by it; the word is well understood, and wants no explanation; what you are now going in search of, and what is denied to no one else but me."

"Hey day! you can use your tongue, Madam, upon occasions."

"Yes, Sir, I can; and I use it to tell you, that you are cruel and unjust to me. I have never asked any thing unreasonable; and I have had every request of mine refused. Had I known, or could I have supposed, you would have shut me up here, and denied me all kind of society, I would

would never have come within these doors.  
Would to God I never had!"

I burst into tears. I threw my hands upon the table, and my head upon them. He finished buckling the straps of his boots ; and then he came and threw his arms around me, and would have caressed me, to make amends for his insult ; but I pushed him from me, and ran out of the room ; for my heart rose against him.

He sent Mrs. Gilson after me, telling her what I had said, desiring her to try to reconcile me to my lot ; and he mounted his horse, and rode away.

My anger got the better of my grief ; which was a lucky circumstance. I ranted like a queen in a tragedy. I said, I would no longer submit to such usage, but would write to my guardians, and desire them to fetch me away, and protect me from my tyrant.

Mrs. Gilson let me run myself out of breath :

breath: she then threw in her kind and prudent counsels.

She said, that, by striving against the stream, I encreased my own distrefs; that, if I would submit to my fate, and descend to soothe Mr. Strictland's humour, I might, in time, soften the harshness of his temper, and bring about many things; but opposition would only harden and encrease it.

She pitied and soothed me with a true maternal tenderness; and she saved me from desperation, and from taking a rash step which I meditated.

From resenting warmly, she brought me to be cool and reasonable; but I settled into grief and melancholy, which she could not cure.

She promised to speak to her master.  
" For," said she, " he will sometimes hear reason from me."

Mrs. Gilson left me when she saw me composed.

composed. I ate no dinner; but I made Mrs. Gilson drink tea with me, and sit with me some time afterwards.

I went to bed early; and, soon after, I heard Mr. Strictland's whistle in the court-yard: and, angry as I was, I was glad to hear him; for I thought his company a kind of protection against the goblins of a strong imagination.

He did not come up stairs till near an hour after; and my fancy was employed in supposing him so much offended, that he would not sleep with me, but go to another bed.

I had lighted a candle in my room, which was in lieu of a companion; but, as soon as I heard my husband coming up stairs, I put it out, and counterfeited a sound sleep, to avoid speaking to him.

He came to bed softly, for fear of waking me, and rose in the same manner.

When breakfast was ready, he sent Mrs.

Gilson

Gilson to ask my company. She said, he was sorry to have vexed me so much yesterday ; and begged me to forgive him, and to speak kindly to him.

I said, when he should acknowledge himself in fault, I might forgive him ; but I doubted whether he thought so or not.

I went down stairs with a resolution to support my spirits, and not to give up my cause till I was compelled to it.

When I entered the room, he met and embraced me—“ Forgive me, Rachel, the pain I gave you yesterday ! Mother Gilson has been schooling me in your behalf : she says, you were very uneasy all the day. I did not mean to vex you ; and I am sorry you took it so.”

My foolish heart fluttered so, that I could not speak presently ; but my tears spoke for me.

He led me to the table, and asked if he should make the tea for me.

I bowed

I bowed, but said nothing; for I dared not trust my voice: but my heart was cheered by his behaviour, which shewed more tenderness than I had yet seen.

As soon as I had recovered my voice, I said—“ Sir, I desire that you will send to Mr. Wotton’s, for my book-case and my harpsichord; for, as I am denied the blessings of society, I shall have need of every resource beside.”

He seemed to consider of it; and then said—“ I will, my dear, the first opportunity; that is, when I can spare the waggon and horses.”

I thanked him, and was cheered by his compliance; for it was the first request of mine that he had seemed to grant.

He behaved with complaisance to me the whole day, which I received gratefully; and this calm lasted several days; but then he returned to his altitudes again, and was as despotic as the Grand Seignior.

We

We went on in this way for several months. I was married the first week in September; and he had not found an opportunity to send for my book-case and harpsichord till the beginning of December.

The day before, Mr. Strictland told me that he should send for them on the morrow, and seemed to think he had conferred an obligation upon me.

I went up stairs into my dressing-room, and wrote to Mr. Wotton as follows—

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I OUGHT, long before this time, to have paid my acknowledgments to you, for your paternal care and goodness to me, from the death of my parents to the day of my marriage. From that day, I have been kept like a prisoner, forbidden to write, or converse with any of my friends. Mr. Strictland will not allow me to make acquaintance

ance with any of the very few conversable neighbours this village affords. He says, three or four times in a year is often enough to visit, or be visited. I am allowed to walk about this old rambling house, and to converse with the pictures with which it is furnished. I have hardly yet got over my fears of walking alone from one room to another. Yet, all these things I could bear, and use myself to, if my husband was good-natured, kind, and companionable; but indeed, my dear Sir, he is neither of them. He treats me like a servant, and speaks as if he was always going to chide me. Once or twice, he has roused a spirit that I did not know was in me; and I have been upon the point of running away from him, and enquiring my way to you. Now, Sir, I beg that you will, as soon as you can conveniently, come over hither, and talk to Mr. Strictland: perhaps, you may prevail upon him to treat me better,

or

or else to let me go away from him, and live in some obscure way, upon what allowance he will agree to make me; for I shall not live long here. I am very unwell: I lose my rest, and my appetite. Mr. Strictland seems to care very little about me; and, I hope, he will be prevailed upon to part with me, without much difficulty. With my best wishes and regards to Mrs. Wotton, and all the family, I am, dear Sir, your unfortunate ward, and humble servant,

“ RACHEL STRICTLAND.”

I gave this letter to Mrs. Gilson, the last thing before I went to bed; and charged her to give it to the servant who was to go with the waggon, for he was to set out early in the morning; but to take care not to give it him before Mr. Strictland.

Having thus guarded all my points, I went to rest, and did not dream of the

storm

storm that was to burst over my head the following day.

When I went down to breakfast, Mrs. Gilson came in hastily. She lifted up her hands and eyes; and, in a low voice—  
“ Prepare yourself for—”

That instant, came in her master, with his face in a flame, and every feature in motion.

He threw a letter at me, saying—  
“ There, Madam! there is your answer from Mr. Wotton!” It was my own letter.

He stormed and raved like a madman: he abused me all to nought. How dared I write to Mr. Wotton, and call him hither, to be a judge over him in his own family? He vented an hundred epithets of rage and contempt against me, Mr. Wotton, and all his family.

I was terrified; but I let him run on till he was out of breath. In the mean time, I got spirit enough to answer him.

“ I am

“ I am neither afraid nor ashamed to own all that I have said to Mr. Wotton : I would say the same to all the world. You have used me cruelly and unjustly ; and I will complain to Heaven and earth !—Why did you marry me ? to torment and distress me ? to have a wife to vent all your ill-humours upon ?—What have I ever done to deserve such usage ? I have only been too tame and humble to you ; and that has made you worse and worse. You have used me basely and ungenerously : you were conscious, that you deserved that I should complain of you ; and, therefore, you had the meanness to open my letter to my guardian. You have gained a new means to triumph over me. I despise you more than ever ; and I would rather die than live with such a man as you are !”

Here I sunk down in a swoon, and lay senseless upon the floor.

It was now his turn to be terrified. He called

called Gilson : she soon came in. They raised me, and seated me in a chair. Mrs. Gilson supported me ; Strictland stamped, and tore his hair, like one distracted ; Gilson called out for water ; and the whole house was a scene of confusion.

As soon as I recovered my senses, I called out—“ Take away that man who has killed me ! take him away, and let me die in peace ! ”

Gilson begged me to compose myself. I felt an unusual pain ; and it seemed to restore my spirits.

I said—“ I am taken very bad : I know not what ails me ; but, I believe, I am dying. Put me to bed, and let me have none but my own sex about me.”

Strictland offered to approach me : he shook like a leaf.

I pushed him away—“ Begone, man ! do not touch me ! ”

Gilson, and the cook-maid, led me up stairs, and put me to bed. My pains continued; and, in an hour, produced an effect which I neither foresaw nor understood, till Mrs. Gilson explained it to me.

She went to her master, and told him what had happened, and desired him to send for the doctor: so they called the apothecary and accoucheur of the village.

Strictland was in agonies: he was disappointed of his hopes; which, I believe, afflicted him still more than my sufferings.

“Compose yourself,” said Mrs. Gilson: “thank Heaven, it is no worse; I feared you would have had her death to answer for. All will be well: but you must turn over a new leaf; for she will not bear your ill-treatment any longer.”

He swore, he would do any thing I desired, if I would but forgive him. He sent away a servant for the doctor, and would fain

fain have then come up to me ; but I sent word, if he wished me to live, he must keep out of my sight, for I could not bear it.

The doctor came. Mrs. Gilson told him all the circumstances : and, moreover, that I had heard news that affected me, and occasioned a great agitation of mind ; and, she thought, I wanted something that was both comforting and composing, to set me to rest.

He sent me a draught, to take at night. He told Mr. Strictland, that I must be kept quiet, and not be disturbed ; and, in a few days, I should be well.

That poor man, the martyr of his humours and passions, spent a miserable day, and restless night. Mrs. Gilson begged him to wait till I was better, before he came before me. She blamed him, and soothed him, by turns ; for he was really an object of pity.

Finding that I had a good night, and was out of danger, she began to plead for my pity and forgiveness of her master. My resentment was not abated : I refused to see him, or to hear of him.

“ Supposing,” said she, “ that you had really been in as much danger as you thought yourself, would not forgiveness have been a duty? Would you wish to leave the world in a state of hatred or malice with any person? Do you stand in no need of forgiveness yourself? Where is the person living that has not sinned?”

I could not reply to these questions.

She went on—“ You cannot repeat the Lord’s Prayer, unless you forgive those that have offended you.”

“ Have I not cause for resentment?”

“ I do not deny that ; but the Scripture says, *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath ; be angry, but sin not.* A true

Christian

Christian must forgive the greatest injuries, or he is not worthy of the name."

" Oh, my good woman ! you are wiser and better than I. You know, and practise, every Christian virtue. I will do what you require of me ; but the sight of your master will ruffle me ; I cannot talk with him at present."

" Stay till you are better first : I do not insist upon it to-day. My master is so much vexed and humbled, that it grieves me to see him : he has neither eaten nor slept since he saw you. Send him some words of comfort presently ; and let me tell him, you will see him as soon as you are able."

I was silent.

" Come, my dear mistress, tell me what I shall say to your husband ?"

" Tell him, that I forgive him what is past : but, if I live, I will be parted from him."

“ That is not forgiveness: I will carry no such message.”

“ What can I say ?”

“ Shall I say, that you forgive him, and will see him as soon as you are able ?”

“ Yes, you may say so: but——”

“ No *ifs* nor *buts*: we must do our duty.”

She went away, lest I should draw back, and left me to my own reflections; which were sufficiently painful, with respect to the past and the future.

She came back in an hour, with some broth she had made, and urged me to take it. “ My master sends his love to you, and thanks you for the kind message; and he says, he will deserve your forgiveness, and very soon give you proofs of it, as soon as you will allow him to see you.”

I begged her to say no more upon the subject at present. I asked her to bring me a book.

“ Not

"Not I, indeed," said she; "I hope I know better."

"Then, you must talk of something to entertain me. Now, I think of it; pray, tell me your own story, and how you came to live with Mr. Strictland."

"Lack-a-day! my story is not worth your hearing."

"I am certain it is better than my own uncomfortable reflections."

"If you say so, I will tell it you. But you must not brood over uncomfortable thoughts: I can see much happiness in store for you, and better prospects than you have had since the day you married."

"Or else they must be very gloomy!" said I.

"Now, do not talk so: you grieve my heart."

"Come, tell me your story, then."

"I will," said she, "directly."

" My parents were shopkeepers in this village. They sold almost every thing, and got a very good livelihood. My brothers were idle and unthrifty youths ; they wanted to be of genteel professions ; they made my father spend all his savings upon them. My sisters and I had what is thought a good education here in the country : we were taught to read and write, and the first rules in arithmetic. We served in the shop, and were of use to my father. My mother performed the duties of the house.

" My eldest sister and I kept the day-book ; and, in the evening, my father used to transfer it to other books. He understood his business well, and would have raised a fortune, but for his prodigal sons.

" My mother died under fifty years of age. She lived not to see the misfortunes of the family, which came on soon after. My eldest brother broke his indentures,

and

and ran away: he went to sea; and we never knew what became of him.

“ The second followed his example: he went several voyages to India; and he gets his bread, and that is all.

“ My father met with several losses: people ran away in his debt; and he got into trouble, and went backward every year.

“ There was a young man, who had served his time, in a great town, to a draper and grocer. He made love to my eldest sister. My father let him into his affairs, and consulted him what he should do.

“ Mr. Dixon had good property to put himself into business. He agreed to take my father’s shop and stock off his hands, and to pay him a sum annually for his life; which my poor father gladly accepted. He married my sister, and keeps the shop unto this day.”

“ Well, but, Mrs. Gilson, you tell me nothing about yourself. Had not you a sweetheart, as well as your sister? I think you are a widow.”

“ Yes, Madam; so I am. I had a sweetheart, a farmer’s son; as honest and worthy a man as ever lived. His parents disapproved of our courtship, because my father could give me no fortune.

“ An uncle of his died, and left him two hundred pounds. He hired a farm, and went into it: but, alas! he had not sufficient to stock it.

“ We married the Michaelmas after. We strove hard for a livelihood; but, somehow or other, we were unlucky in all our undertakings.

“ Our corn was spoiled, our cattle died, and nothing succeeded with us.

“ My husband died seven years after our marriage, (I verily think, of a broken heart) and left me, with one son, and a

ruffled

ruffled skane, to get through as well as I could.

“ My wish was, to pay every one their due, whatever became of us; so I gave up all we had into the hands of a gentleman, and it was sold to pay the creditors: and all were paid to the last shilling, and there was fifty pounds left for me and my son.

“ My sister and I loved each other dearly. She and her husband took us into their house for a time; but I scorned to hang upon another for support. I resolved to go to service, as soon as I could get a place that was suitable to me.

“ My husband’s relations were all people of good property; yet they could stand by, and see his widow and son in a state of indigence, and never reach out a hand to save us from sinking under it.

“ Mr. Strictland bought this estate. His wife died soon after he came to live here. He wanted a housekeeper, to be

over his servants: I was recommended to him, and he accepted of my services; and I have lived here five-and-twenty years.

“ The old gentleman was a kind master. After his death, I continued with his son; and, I can truly say, I have been a faithful servant to them both.

“ I resign myself to the will of Heaven: I see many others worse off than me; I am thankful for the good I receive, and patient under the evil.”

“ Excellent woman!” said I; “ thou art content with a little, and patient under thy ill-fortune. What a lesson to me!—But, what became of your son?”

“ He is living, God be praised! He is all my care, and all my hope, in this world.”

“ What situation is he in?”

“ He is a farmer’s servant. All that I could spare went for his board and education:

cation: he is qualified for an upper servant, and will soon, as I hope, be a head man; that is all that I can hope for him: but, if he is a good man in his station, he is all the same, in the sight of God, as if he was in a higher, and I am thankful for it."

" I thank you for your story; it is that of Christian patience and peace, under sufferings and misfortunes; I will endeavour to profit by it."

" My good mistress, I am very much attached to you; I am sensible of your merit, and that your situation is unpleasant; but I think, most of us increase our sufferings by our own impatience: by our submission and resignation, we blunt the edge of them. I would fain teach you the lesson of patience, which I have learned myself; and then I shall think I have done you good service."

I was affected by her good sense and humility;

humility ; it reconciled me to my fate, and humbled me in my own eyes. I felt, that I had increased my sufferings by my passion and resentment. I looked up to Heaven, and begged pardon for my impatience and petulance : I prayed for patience and fortitude ; my mind was softened towards my husband, and more at ease with myself. I went to rest in more tranquillity than I had known since I went to Woodlands.

The next day I was much better.

I loved Mrs. Gilson better every day : I was resolved to go to her school of patience, and to practise those virtues, which shone in her through the veil of adversity.

The third evening after my illness, Mrs. Gilson begged of me to see her master before he went to rest : she was so earnest, and so right in her remonstrances, that I could not refuse her. She went and fetched him.

He was so humbled, and so dejected, that I felt pity for him; and yet, my heart said, that he well deserved it.

He kneeled down by my bedside; he seemed unable to speak for a minute. At last, he sighed deeply, and said—“Can you forgive me?”

I answered—“Yes, I do: but you have another forgiveness to ask. Wretched are they who suffer their passions to be their masters! You have suffered for it; so have I. You have been in the wrong; I have not been without blame. Let us pray to God to forgive us both!”

He said—“Amen, I pray God!”

Mrs. Gilson repeated her Amen with fervour.

Mr. Strictland said—“Now, I shall go to bed in peace, and hope to rest there.”

I said—“I wish you a good night, Sir!”

“I thank you, my dearest! thank you!

thank

thank you! You are too good to me; but I will hope to deserve it."

" Come, Sir," said Mrs. Gilson, " you must not stay here too long: let me light you to your chamber."

He kissed my hand, and retired to rest.

Gilson came back, and slept with me as before. She thanked and praised me for my behaviour; and I went to rest in peace and tranquillity.

As soon as Mrs. Gilson perceived I was awake, she thus spoke—" My dear mistress, I have been thinking, that you might believe me very partial to my master, by my earnestness in his behalf. I thought I was in my duty, and that needs no apology. You have fulfilled all my wishes, and my hopes of you, by your behaviour last night; and now, I will be the counsellor on your side.

" My poor master is sufficiently humbled,

bled. Before his temper rises again, for Nature will return to it's bent, I advise you to make some terms and conditions with him, and to obtain such things as may contribute to your ease and comfort. He will refuse you nothing at this time: but think well of what you ask; and you may lay a foundation of future peace."

" I thank you, my good friend, for your wise counsel. I had once intended to make but one condition, which was that of a separation; but you have shaken my resolution. I will try him once more; and I will shew you the terms I shall offer."

She was pleased with me, and I with her.

She went down stairs, and I set my mind to work upon the important subject. After I had breakfasted, I rose, took my pen, and wrote as follows—

“ ARTICLES OF RECONCILIATION BETWEEN  
MR. AND MRS. STRICTLAND.

“ Mrs. Strictland thinks she has been most unworthily treated. She had once resolved, at all hazards, to acquaint Mr. Wotton with every part of Mr. Strictland’s behaviour to her, and to request his assistance to make articles of separation. Upon farther consideration; and reflections upon the duties of her situation, she consents to forego, or, at least, to postpone, such intention, if Mr. Strictland will agree to the following conditions.

“ I. Mr. Strictland shall be very punctual in the payment of the allowance stipulated by Mrs. Strictland’s guardians, for her cloaths and pin-money; viz. Fifty Pounds a year; and shall not, in future, put her to the disagreeable necessity of asking for it.

“ N. B. The first quarter is now due.

“ II.

“ II. Mr. Strictland shall allow his wife a servant to attend upon her; for she cannot bear that so respectable a woman as Mrs. Gilson should attend upon a young woman under age, unless in particular cases, where her skill and tenderness are required. She can never enough acknowledge her care and kindness in the present case. Mrs. Strictland does not wish for a lady-servant, but only an humble, decent, and cleanly girl, about her person; and she will pay her wages out of her own allowance.

“ III. Mr. Strictland shall allow his wife to visit and be visited by such gentry in the neighbourhood as are of unexceptionable character: particularly the family of the Rev. Mr. Elton, whose friendship she is very desirous to cultivate. Mr. Strictland has an acknowledged right to except against any improper acquaintance, and

and any person to whom he may have any particular dislike or objection.

“ IV. Mr. Strictland shall permit his wife to write to her friends; especially to her guardians, and the friends of her family.

“ V. Mrs. Strictland requests, that Mr. Strictland would behave to her with complaisance and kindness, till he discovers her to be unworthy of it; and to use himself to habits of courtesy: she presumes, that it will promote his happiness as much as hers. She requests him to forgive all that he has seen amiss in her; and she truly forgives all that is past on his side; and wishes these articles may be the foundation of future peace and unity between them.”

When Mrs. Gilson came up again, I read the articles to her: she was pleased with them upon the whole, but objected

to some passages. She advised me to scratch out, "*at least, to postpone*," in the first article, and I complied; but I would not alter any of the rest. I desired her to give them to her master as soon as he came in.

After dinner, he sent to desire my leave to wait on me.

I pitied poor Gilson, for being obliged to trudge up and down stairs so often; but she said—"Never think of it, Madam: I can never be better employed than at present."

I sent word, I should be glad to see him; but it went against the grain: however, I could not now recede; and I resolved to fulfil my proposals.

He came, with a more composed aspect than I had seen him wear for a long time past, with my paper in his hand. He bowed to me, and looked as he used to do when he courted me for a wife. He asked  
after

after my health, and thanked God that I was getting well.

He saw my pen and ink upon the table: he took it up, and wrote under my articles—

“ I AGREE to every thing my dear wife has proposed. Witness my hand,

“ JONATHAN STRICTLAND.”

He gave the paper into my hand: he bowed; I curtsied; and you never saw a politer nor better satisfied pair.

I thanked him for complying with my requests; and he thanked me for making the conditions so easy.

He then took out his pocket-book, and gave me a Bank note for twenty pounds.

I thanked him; but said, I had rather he would pay me in cash, for I could not change the note.

He said, there was no change wanted: he desired me to accept the whole; for, as

I had

I had charged myself with the servant's wages, I ought to be enabled to pay it; and, that he should pay me the same sum quarterly.

I thanked him, and prayed inwardly that this humour might last; for I feared it was too good to hold long.

He asked my leave to drink tea with me. I said, I was obliged by his company.

Old Gilson wept for joy. She had never seen any thing like it before; and could hardly believe her eyes.

After tea, he said—"To-morrow is Wednesday, which is club-day: if it is agreeable to you, my dear, I will send to ask Miss Elton to spend the day with you; that is, if you are well enough to see her."

I was agreeably surprized at this proof of his sincerity in regard to the articles. I answered with caution, lest he should think I preferred Miss Elton's company to his.

I said,

I said, if it was agreeable to him, it would be so to me.

He left me at eight o'clock. He left me easier and happier than I had been ever since I was the declared mistress of Woodlands.

Gilson and I had a long gossip afterwards. The good woman promised me much happiness, from my prudent conduct and her wise counsels; and we went to rest with our hearts at ease.

The next day he called on me, and took an affectionate leave before he went to his club. He told me he had sent for Miss Elton, and that she would come to me soon.

I began to hope that he was, indeed, convinced of his fault; and that he would, in future, be a kind husband to me.

Miss Elton came early, and I spent an agreeable day in her company.

I told her, I was permitted to cultivate  
her

her friendship, and that of all her family, and I desired to see them as often as possible. She brought the compliments of her family. Her father desired to know, whether I loved reading. I said, I had suffered much for want of my books; but they were lately arrived, and I should be glad of her assistance to arrange them. Mr. Elton had desired his daughter to tell me he would lend me any of his books; as, he supposed, I should not find any to my taste at Woodlands.

She told me, her sister Kitty offered her services to help to nurse me; and that she was jealous, lest her sister should engross my favour. I desired to see her in a day or two. Miss Elton would eat with me in my apartment: she was obliged to go home early in the evening, but promised to see me again soon.

I went down stairs a few days after, and lived again in the family way.

Mr. Strictland was very good for several weeks; but, as Mrs. Gilson foretold, Nature would return to it's bent: however, his behaviour was more tolerable, upon the whole, from that time; and, though he broke out in passions and ill humours occasionally, yet he always recollects himself, and paid more attentions to me.

I have shewed you his character in it's two extreme points, his worst and his best behaviour, that you may judge him fairly.

I desired Mrs. Elton to look out for such a servant as I described. She recommended a young woman, who then wanted a place, a cottager's daughter in the parish. She came to me the week after, and has lived with me *unto this day*, as good Mrs. Gilson says.

From this time, I saw the Elton family often. On Wednesdays, I had always one or two of them to dine with me; and I made excuse to see them, at their own house,

house, as often as I dared. They were a family of love and unity, and every virtue resided among them.

Mrs. Elton came sometimes with one of her daughters: her company gave me entertainment and improvement.

One day, when we were chatting upon various subjects, she gave me such advice as I shall never forget; for it made my situation more than tolerable.

“ My good neighbour,” said she, “ by your account, you listen to Mrs. Gilson, and are grateful for her good offices: will you permit me to offer such advice as myself and my children have profited by?”

“ Yes, surely, Madam; and I shall be thankful for every instance of it.”

“ You are here in a large and lonely house, and have found it gloomy and uncomfortable; and, though you are sometimes lively and pleasant upon the dark rooms and old pictures, I perceive that

they have taken hold of your imagination. I will give you a receipt to make them familiar to you, and to make you forget they were ever formidable to you."

"I shall be truly thankful for your receipt, Madam."

"It is only this. Use yourself to a constant habit of employment: reduce it to a method—Such hours to your first duties; such to needle-work; such to reading; such to music; such to writing; such to exercise, to walking, to gardening. Thus your time will be filled up; there will be no room for idle or gloomy thoughts, and you will find the days too short for you. If there should be any time to spare, I will tell you of another employment, that is both pleasant and profitable."

"Dear Madam, what is that?"

"It is spinning flax, or hemp. Myself, my daughters, and my servants, do more or less of it every day, as we have leisure from

from our other duties. We spin all our sheets, table-cloths, towels, and kitchen-linen : it turns to very good account, and it makes us pleased and happy in ourselves."

" I shall be proud to be your scholar, Madam, if you will take the trouble to teach me."

" That I will, with pleasure; and my daughters will be ready to assist me, when I cannot attend you myself."

" I put myself to school to you, Madam ; but you must get me the apparatus for this employment."

" I will get you a wheel, and all things necessary ; and one of us will come and teach you, whenever you will send to us."

They got all things in readiness, and I began the week following ; and this proved a most pleasant and profitable employment. It relieved me from that ennui of

which so many complain; and it gratified Mr. Strictland, who was pleased to say—“ I am glad to find that my wife is good for something:” and it confirmed the Eltons in his favour.

One New-year’s-day, Mr. Strictland invited the families of Elton and Southgate to dine with him; and he allowed me, in conjunction with Mrs. Gilson, to order the dinner.

It was in the old English style; plentiful, but not elegant, and every thing good in it’s kind.

Another day, he gave a dinner to all his workmen.

We returned the visit to our neighbours; and this was the only invitation we gave or accepted through the year.

The general course of our housekeeping was this. We killed a hog one week, and a sheep another. Mr. Southgate killed a sheep once a fortnight likewise: half our

sheep

sheep went to his house, and half his sheep to ours. We had plenty of pork and mutton, as you see; but seldom any thing else. Sometimes a piece of lean beef, of the inferior parts; and then it was fat pork and lean beef to eat together, like ham and chicken. We had plenty of garden-stuff in our own grounds, and puddings and dumplings within-doors.

This might be called good housekeeping; and so it was, in fact: but to me, who had been used to another kind of table, it was disagreeable, and it was a long time before I could relish it.

I used to ask for a chicken sometimes, but Mrs. Gilson dared not kill one without her master's orders; and his manner was so ungracious, that I dared not ask favours of him.

I grew used to the house and it's master, as Mrs. Gilson foretold. I recovered my health, but my spirit was not quite restored,

nor yet quite subdued; but I reconciled my mind to what I knew to be my duty.

Thus I went through the first year of my marriage. The second brought with it an increase of my blessings and comforts: Heaven sent me a dear child, which I received as it's best gift. Strictland was overjoyed at the birth of a son; for he, like other men, wished to continue his family: he had expressed a desire, that he might fill the old house with a new race of his own.

Mrs. Gilson was so good as to nurse me herself. She said, she would never yield that office to any other; for it was her pleasure.

She, too, enjoyed the birth of my son, as if it had been her own—Now, she should see all her wishes accomplished: she should see her master and mistress happy.

A new set of ideas, cares, and employments, succeeded this event. I nursed my son;

son; and this office was both a duty and reward. The child grew, and answered all my hopes; and now I began to find myself at home.

In the summer-time, I used to walk in the fields, and I improved the garden. I made a green-house of one of the uninhabited parlours, and filled it with exotics of various kinds. I never failed to visit the two charming pictures, and my heart paid them an involuntary homage.

Mr. Strictland was naturally rough and surly. He had chiefly lived at home, with no other company but his servants: he was accustomed to command, and to carry a high hand over those under him. His marriage, and the birth of his son, softened him a little. When he thought my life in danger, he was concerned deeply; for his conscience reproached him with his ill behaviour to me, and he would make his peace with both upon any terms. Neverthe-

less, Nature would return again to it's bent; he had never been accustomed to check or restrain himself, and he scorned that any other should.

“ One day, he came in with a pleasanter look than common—“ Rachel, I have done something that will please you. I would not do it to please Mr. Wotton: what I do, shall be of my own accord.”

“ What have you done, Sir? Tell me, that I may thank you for it.”

“ I have bought a carriage—Come, and see it.”

“ A post-chaise, Sir?”

“ No, d—n it! No, rot it!—Not a post-chaise!”

“ Lord bless me! How should I know what it was?”

“ I understand you! Nothing will serve you but a post-chaise!”

“ You are very unkind, Sir; I meant no such thing.”

He

He flung out of the room, and went scolding into the court-yard.

Mrs. Gilson came in. She asked, what had put him out of humour?

I told her all that had passed; and added, that he seemed always seeking out for something to be angry at, and to quarrel with.

" You cannot alter Nature, nor I neither," said she. " Come along with me, for he wants you to see the chaise, and he will be pleased again."

I followed her into the court-yard. He was getting into the chaise, to try the horse. He drove it round the court-yard, and seemed to vent his ill humours upon the poor horse.

He saw me and Gilson observing him, and drove up to the porch. He jumped out, and came to us.

Mrs. Gilson said—" A very neat chaise,

indeed, Sir; and the head is very convenient to keep off a shower of rain."

"Yes," said he; "and Sorrel goes well in it, and looks well in the harness, don't he?"

Mrs. Gilson admired it; and asked me, if I did not think so?

I said all that I could think of in it's praise. He was gratified, and came into the house in as good a humour as usual.

I could never be sure of the temper he was in; but was obliged to guard every word I spoke, as if before a court of justice. I am afraid my dear friend will blame me when I confess, that it was always a holiday to me when he went abroad.

The next year, I brought forth a daughter, who was most welcome to me; but her father set little value upon her. He was one of those *wise* men who thought

women

women a drug, and that they were hardly worth rearing.

I saw, in my daughter, a future friend and companion; one, upon whom my wearied heart might rest it's cares, and from whom new hopes and expectations should arise to cheer my latter days.

A second son was born to me, and a second daughter; but they were cut short by the scythe of Time, in an early stage of childhood. The two elder are living, and the dear objects of my hopes and cares.

Mr. Strictland was angry at their deaths; and with me, because I did not bring stronger and healthier children.

While my last child was in a state of infancy, Mr. Strictland met with an accident that hurt his health, and was, perhaps, the latent cause of his decline and death.

He was a breeder of horses; and he sometimes broke them in himself.

He had a very fine colt, that promised to be a capital horse : he was very high-spirited ; and his master was proud to see that he would be managed by none but himself.

One day, when he was engaged in this employment, the colt threw him, and he lay some time as dead.

When he revived, he spit blood ; and it was supposed that he was much hurt inwardly.

He kept his chamber three weeks. Mrs. Gilson and I nursed him alternately ; for I had my babe to attend beside : but, I trust, I was not wanting in my attention to my husband.

He was exceeding fretful during his confinement. His doctor, who knew something of his disposition, advised him to keep himself composed and quiet ; for that every thing that ruffled his mind was bad for his internal complaint.

He

He expressed great resentment against the colt ; and said, he would give him a good trimming, the first time he got across him.

I said, I hoped he would never get upon his back again.

He replied—“What signifies your hopes, or your wishes? It shall never be said, that man, woman, or beast, got the better of me.”

The doctor smiled ; I shook my head, but I durst not speak. And so ended this scene.

Mr. Strictland was as good as his word. As soon as he got abroad again, he gave the colt a good trimming. “There!” said he, “I hope I have taught him to know his master !”

I took warning by the lesson, and bore in mind, that he was my master also.

He was fond of his children ; but he could not bear with their little childish

ways,

ways, nor with their cries, and other noises. He would send them away out of his hearing, for he could not bear their cursed noises.

Strictland had many disagreeable qualities ; but he had no vices. He was sober and temperate, chaste in his manners and conversation. He was industrious and frugal : this last degenerated into avarice, which excited him to accumulate wealth, which he never enjoyed ; and, doubtless, it would have increased upon him, had he lived to old age.

I had a strong and lively imagination, which is generally accompanied with a degree of enthusiasm towards it's favourite objects. Whatever I love, it is with warmth ; and I know that there is a little romance in my composition.

I am going to apologize to my friend for an adventure which her cool and steady judgment may, perhaps, condemn : and

and yet it has given me one of the greatest pleasures of my life ; and, I hope, I shall never have cause to repent it.

One day, I heard the smack of Mr. Strictland's whip, as if he was using it improperly ; for he did, sometimes, condescend to inflict manual chastisement upon his younger servants. I heard, also, the shrieks of a young voice, that touched my heart.

I went into the court-yard, to see who was the subject of his wrath.

I heard him say—" Go, you young dog ! If ever you dare to come begging here again, I will flog you within an inch of your life."

The child went away crying and sobbing bitterly.

I went on to the outward gate, and met him. I asked him, who and what he was ; but he could not speak for crying.

I saw,

I saw, at a distance, leaning against a tree, an old man, very ragged, as was the boy, and with every sign of poverty and wretchedness.

The man beckoned the boy, as soon as he came in sight.

I gave the child a penny. The man bowed to me, in token of gratitude.

He came forward. I beckoned him to come nearer. He came up to me with humility and courtesy.

I spoke to him—"I want to know the reason of Mr. Strictland's displeasure against this child, and what he has done to offend him?"

"Nothing," said the boy: "I have done nothing but ask his charity."

"Did you say nothing to provoke him?"  
"I said, I had a right to ask charity at that house, if all others refused me. My grandfather bid me say so."

"Alas,

“ Alas, Madam!” said the old man ; “ if you knew who that boy is, you would pity him. Your countenance shews all that is good and gracious. I am sure you would pity his unhappy fate.”

“ Who is he, then ?” said I.

“ He is the right heir of this house and estate, if every one had his own.”

“ You surprize me! What is his name?”

“ Reginald Henry Marney.”

“ I wish to hear this story. But I must not tarry here longer : if Mr. Strictland should see me conversing with you, he would be angry. Go away, friend. Come again on Wednesday, at noon-time. Do not come to the house, but wait till I come to you here. I wish to know this child’s story : I pity him indeed, and wish to do him service ; but I must first be convinced that he is what he pretends to be.”

I gave the man a shilling, and bade him go out of sight as soon as possible. He

prayed

prayed for blessings upon me: he went away; and I returned to the house.

My imagination had now a fine subject to work upon: it wove a thousand romantic webs, and then broke them in pieces; but still, all my fancies bore some relation to the old pictures. I wished impatiently for Wednesday, that I might hear the story.

I thought Mr. Strictland later than usual: I watched every minute. As soon as his back was turned, in came Miss Elton.

I had given a general invitation to the family, that whichsoever of them could be spared on Wednesdays, should spend the day with me.

She saw that I was reserved and absent; for I was weighing in my mind, whether to trust her with the secret, or not.

She asked, what ailed me; saying—"I fear I come unseasonably."

"No,

"No, that you cannot do: but yet, I am under a difficulty."

She smiled—"If I did not know you well, I should think you had made an appointment, and that my coming interrupted it."

"You have hit it, my dear: I have made an appointment, and was debating with myself, whether to take you into the party, or not. Can you keep a secret from all your family, and from every other person, even your parents?"

She looked serious for a minute, and then said—"If it is an honest one, and will injure nobody, I will."

"Oh, Nancy! I can hardly forgive that *if*. Trust my honour and integrity for that, and make me a solemn promise of secrecy."

She did so; and then I took my hat and cloak, and said—"Follow me. I am waited for."

She

She did so, and we went to the place of appointment.

I soon saw the old man and the boy, sitting upon the ground, by the road-side. I beckoned them to follow me to a seat at some distance, where I sat down, with Miss Elton by my side. I made the boy sit down on the ground, at a little distance. The man stood near me.

I bade him relate the story he had promised; but warned him, to have a strict regard to truth in all that he should say.

He made me a bow that was above his degree, and began as follows—

“ I suppose, Madam, that you are Mr. Strictland’s wife?” I nodded.

“ You have shewn a noble mind; and I will tell you our story.

“ My good lady, you have, doubtless, heard, that your mansion, called Woodlands, and the estate round it, have been in

the possession of many great and noble families.

“ The Montforts were once the first barons of the realm. They withstood the tyranny of kings and priests, and were the guardians of the rights and liberties of the people.

“ It passed from them to the Roscelins, by a female branch; and, in like manner, from them to the Marneys.

“ The heiress of the Roscelin family was married to Sir Reginald Marney. His picture, and that of the lady Isobel, his wife, are now hanging in one of the parlours at Woodlands, and are reckoned very fine pieces.”

“ They are so, indeed,” said I; “ and they testify that you are well informed.”

“ There was a succession of noble knights and esquires of that name—There was Sir Henry; and Sir Philip; and Sir Reginalds, two or three.

“ The

“ The estate was in the possession of Henry Marney, Esq. at the time of the Restoration. His son Reginald went over with James the Second; but returned, after many years, and took the oaths to King William.

“ This gentleman did not marry till late in life. He left two sons, Reginald and Henry. The eldest was but nineteen when his father died.

“ There was never greater antipathy between the two first brothers, Cain and Abel, than between the two of the name of Marney. Reginald was proud and vain-glorious. Henry was brave, generous, and courteous: he was beloved by all the inhabitants of this his native village.

“ There was a certain lawyer, whom the father of these youths had taken into his family, to be his steward. He had managed the estate while the squire was in France, and had wormed himself into his favour

favour and confidence, so that he did nothing without consulting him.

“ Mr. Longford got on the right side of the young squire, Reginald. Instead of healing the breach between the two brothers, he widened it. Reginald insulted Henry, who offered to fight him : he refused it, but provoked him by insolent language.

“ One day, Reginald struck his brother. Henry returned the blow with interest, and beat him severely.

“ When Mr. Longford came in, and saw the squire in this situation, he took part against Henry, and advised his patron to turn him out of doors. This was ordered, and executed, the same instant.

“ Henry was then under age, and could not demand his fortune.

“ Longford was his father’s executor, and used his power to distress him to the utmost.

“ Thus was this deserving young man thrown upon the world, and obliged to seek his fortune.

“ He tried the friends of his family. They were generous of advice, but frugal of their assistance. They put him to a merchant, who sent him abroad to transact his business on the continent.

“ Henry Marney behaved so well in his situation, that he gained the affection and confidence of his master.

“ When his time was expired, he offered to take him into partnership, if he could bring money sufficient to purchase a share in it ; and to settle him in France, as his partner and factor there.

“ Mr. Marney came over to London, By his master’s advice, he employed a lawyer, to demand the portion his father had bequeathed him.

“ Reginald was already involved in troubles. He had set out upon too large

a scale :

a scale: he kept a pack of hounds, a large stud of horses; he loved hunting, shooting, and drinking; he outran his fortune, and Longford supplied him with his own money.

“ When Henry’s agent demanded his fortune, that villain Longford pretended that there was a flaw in the will; and that it was in Reginald’s power to withhold his portion, and to pay him as much, or as little, as he pleased; or even to keep back the whole.

“ The agent remonstrated on the cruelty and injustice of this dealing—What had Henry Marney done, that he should be disinherited?

“ Longford, after much subterfuge and evasion, offered to pay to Henry three thousand pounds. His father’s bequest was seven thousand.

“ Henry and his friend were informed of this offer; and the honest lawyer ad-

vised them to accept it, rather than wait the issue of a law-suit with a man so artful and deceitful as Longford, and so inveterate as Squire Marney.

“ Accordingly, they accepted the sum offered ; and Henry gave releases of all farther claim upon his brother.

“ His master took him into a share of his business : he gave him his daughter in marriage ; and sent him over to France again, where he resided till his brother’s death.

“ Reginald run out his fortune, and had no skill in business ; so that he could not look into the state of his affairs. Longford supplied him ; and told him, that he would, one day, put him into a way to repay him.

“ He saw that his constitution was ruined, and that he declined daily. He took an opportunity of persuading him to make a will, in which he acknowledged a

very large debt to him, and left him his whole fortune to discharge it.

“ Reginald died at the age of forty ; and thus the estates of the family of Marney fell into the hands of the villain who had long laid in wait for them.

“ Henry Marney was unfortunate in his business : he lost money every year.

“ His father-in-law died insolvent ; and Fortune declared against him in all his undertakings.

“ As soon as he heard of his brother’s death, he made haste to settle his affairs, and to leave France.

“ He paid every demand ; and, with a small residue, returned to England with his wife and two children. The former was in a deep decline.

“ He made no doubt of succeeding to the family estate, and to bring up his son as the heir of it.

“ This poor beggar, that now stands before you, ladies, was not always the wretch he now is, though never in a state of independence. My family is ancient, though now fallen to decay.

“ I was a clerk and writer in the house of Mr. Compton, Mr. Marney’s father-in-law.

“ As soon as he came to London, he made enquiry after the remains of this dispersed family; and I was the only person to give him information of it.

“ I shall never forget the melancholy scene of my first introduction to him!

“ Henry Marney was a fine person, and looked the gentleman all over. His countenance was overcast with grief, which he stifled for his wife’s sake: but you saw a noble heart breaking under misfortune.

“ He had just heard an imperfect account of his brother’s will; but hoped to find it a false report.

“ I was

“ I was unwilling to increase his distress; yet I could not avoid answering his questions: I did it with so much caution, that he observed it.

“ My friend, you seem concerned for me,” he said.

“ I am, indeed, Sir,” said I; “ and heartily wish it was in my power to be of any service to you.”

“ Will you go with me to Woodlands, to fathom this sea of iniquity?”

“ I will, Sir, if you please to accept me as your servant.”

“ He struck his hand upon his breast, and exclaimed—“ Servant! It is for men of property to keep servants: I have none. If you serve me, it must be from pure love and friendship; for I have nothing to pay your services.”

“ It shall be so, Sir; and, when you recover your rights, you shall repay me by taking me into your service.”

“ Generous spirit ! I wish you a better master !—Let me know where to find you, and you shall hear from me soon.”

“ I left him, and went home to my dwelling.

“ After I was gone, his wife begged him not to leave her, as she feared she should not live till he returned.

“ She died in a short time afterwards ; and he was overwhelmed with grief and despondency.

“ He sent for me the day after, and employed me to give the necessary orders concerning her interment ; for, though I was so lately known to him, he had no other person to employ, or to rely upon.

“ The day after the funeral, I waited on Mr. Marney, who was moaning over his children, and in the very depth of sorrow.

“ Now, Sir,” said I, “ I am come to offer my company, to go with you to Woodlands.

Woodlands. Change of scene, change of air, and attention to business, will dispel the gloom that hangs over you, and restore your health and spirits."

" Oh, Balderson !" said he, " how can I acknowledge your kindness ? it is more than I have met with from any man beside. Your regard for your late master induces you to serve all his relations, and that at a time when none of them can pay you for your services. I pray God to reward you ! —Alas ! I cannot !"

" I expect no reward but your friendship. Let us not speak of it, I pray you, Sir. I have a proposal to make you ; which is, to leave your daughter in the care of my wife, while we are absent : she and her children will be proud to wait on her, and to pay her every attention in their power. You may discharge these lodgings, and take young master with us into the country. We will take a lodging somewhere

near Woodlands, and try what the country air, exercise, and employment, will do for you both."

" He was scrupulous of being expensive to me ; but he had taken such a hold of my heart, that I would have divided my last shilling with him.

" My wife lived in Southwark. She kept a chandler's shop, and sold every thing almost : she got a decent livelihood. I wrote for the shopkeepers, whenever I could get employment ; and this was the height of my prosperity.

" The week following, I attended Mr. Marney and his son into the country. We took lodgings at a farm-house in this village. We enquired after the rector of the parish, and his character. Hearing him well spoken of, I advised Mr. Marney to go to him, and tell him his story. " If," said I, " he is what a good clergyman should be, he will pity and befriend you."

" We

" We waited on the Rev. Mr. Dalby, and told our story. He expressed much concern for Mr. Marney's misfortunes, and wished to serve him, but knew not how to do it.

" Mr. Longford is a rich man," said he: " I am a poor one. If I make him my enemy, it will do Mr. Marney no good, but may do me much harm. My good Sir, you must seek relief from the law, and not from the church: wicked men set us at defiance, and care little for our remonstrances. You must employ a lawyer; and he must apply to me, to certify your birth and baptism: this I will do faithfully; and I will give you my best advice beside. While you stay here, you shall be welcome to my table at all times; and I will do all I can, in the way of mediation between you and Mr. Longford, whenever I am called upon properly."

" We thanked the worthy clergyman for

his kindness; and asked, if he could recommend us to a lawyer of fortune and character, who would either patronize us out of pity and generosity, or else advise us to give up our hopes at once.

“ He said he would consider of it, and let us hear farther in a few days.

“ Accordingly we were invited, a few days after, to meet a gentleman, learned in the laws of the land, and to lay Mr. Marney’s case before him.

“ The gentleman shewed his humanity and kindness. He spoke to this purpose—“ I am truly concerned for your situation, and wish it may be in my power to do you service. Mr. Longford knows something of me: I think he will not refuse to confer with me upon the subject. The objects of my enquiry must be, first, Whether the will, under which he holds the estate, is a good one? Secondly, Whether your brother had a right to dispose of all the estates of the family? As to the first, I can-  
not

not flatter you with any hope of it. Mr. Longford knows the law too well to bring that into question. Your hopes must arise from the second. I should suppose, that some parts of the family estates may be entailed; and, unless your brother cut them off, which, I think, he could not do without your knowledge and concurrence, you may lay claim to them. But, in case we have nothing to hope from either, I would advise to appeal to his humanity for some assistance for you: the hardship of your case, and the judgment which the world passes upon him, as the man who has deprived you of your inheritance, may, perhaps, induce him to do something for you; at least, we will leave nothing untried to bring him to terms of reason and of justice."

" And is this all the hope you have to build upon?" said Henry Marney: " then I must appeal to a higher tribunal—I must claim the protection of Heaven for my poor

poor children, and find my own refuge in the grave!"

" Mr. Dalby talked to him: he blamed his despondency, and called upon him to exert the strength and fortitude of a Christian, to bear his sufferings with patience, and trust his cause to Heaven; that in case his worldly hopes should fail him utterly, he had still a better hope in reversion.

" The lawyer comforted him in the way of his profession; and I could only argue as a friend, and implore him, for his children's sake, to bear up and wait the event.

" I saw that his heart and hopes were sunk; and a gloomy kind of tranquillity was spread over him, which only covered a deep despair.

" The week following, our counsellor waited on Mr. Longford; who received him with politeness, and heard him with patience.

" In reply to the first question, he read the

will to him : to the second, he answered—  
“ I know the tenure by which I hold these estates, and I will keep them by it. Henry Marney always behaved ill to his brother; who would have disinherited him, if he had not incurred the debts to me which are acknowledged in the will.—Sir, he is a beggar, and cannot repay your services: if you are wise, you will have done with him and his affairs from this time.”

“ The counsellor then urged the pleas of justice and humanity. He hinted, that the world believed that Henry Marney was an injured man, in regard to his private fortune bequeathed by his father; and now, a second time, in being deprived of his inheritance: that he was blamed, and Mr. Marney pitied. He urged him by every motive to do something for him; and, at least, to set him above want.

“ Longford grew surly and reserved; and they parted with hardly civility.”

While

While we were in this part of the story, my maid Peggy came to seek us, and to tell us that dinner waited for us.

I bade her return, and we would follow her. I then spoke to Balderson—

“ I am summoned home to dinner: I cannot invite you to my house, for many reasons; but I will endeavour to assist you.”

I took out my purse. I gave him two guineas. The man looked astonished.

“ Put yourself and the boy into better cloathing. Meet me here this day se’nnight, at twelve o’clock, and tell me the remainder of your story: I am deeply interested in it, and shall remember all that you have told me. But, before you go, tell me how that boy can be your grandson?”

“ Because his father married my daughter.”

“ What, then, was Henry Marney his father?”

“ No; his grandfather.”

“ I under-

" I understand you: that son, who was here with his unfortunate father?"

" The very same."

" Farewel, friend. I shall expect to see you this day week."

" Farewel, dear lady!—May God reward your bounty to this wretched orphan and his protector!—Kneel down, boy, and pray for a blessing on your benefactress!"

Miss Elton and I tan home; and we heard these grateful creatures invoking Heaven in our behalf all the way.

We could talk of nothing else the whole day. She desired she might be present at the remainder of the story; and I promised, that she only should partake of this secret, which I should guard carefully from Mr. Strictland.

I had often enquired of Mr. Strictland concerning those five pictures; and he told me, in general terms, that they belonged

longed to the Marneys. I had asked their names, and their history : he grew tired of answering me.

“ Will you never have done talking of those pictures ? It seems as if you were ready to fall down and worship them.”

“ No, I will not do that ; but I respect them exceedingly.”

“ Respect a faggot-stick !—You may, as well as an old figure painted upon canvas.”

“ They are very fine paintings, Sir : good pictures are sometimes highly valued.”

“ Well, I have heard so before now ; and you may set what value you please upon them. I should like somebody else should take a fancy to them, and give me a good sum of money for them : I would take it.”

Money was his idol, and his estimate for every thing.

The week rolled round in its usual course ;

course ; Wednesday returned ; Miss Elton came early ; Mr. Strictland went his journey, and we to our appointment.

Balderson and his boy were waiting for us. Their rags were thrown aside. They were dress'd so tight and tidy, that Mr. Strictland would not have known them. The boy was wash'd clean ; and his countenance was open, pleasant, and manly. I thought I could trace a likeness to the admired picture of Sir Reginald Marney. Miss Elton would not allow it ; but rather laughed at the excursion of my fancy.

After the greetings of the day, Balderson pursued his story—

“ Soon after the interview I have mentioned, our good counsellor received a letter from Mr. Longford ; and we were summoned to hear the contents. In it he acknowledged, that there were some apparent hardships in the case of Henry Marney ; that, out of humanity, and pity

at

at his unhappy situation, he offered to pay him one thousand pounds, upon condition of his signing a release to all his claims upon the Marney estates, for himself and his posterity; and that this writing should be signed, sealed, and witnessed, properly.

“ Mr. Marney refused to sign any such instrument. He said, his health had been declining for a long time past, and he should soon be out of the reach of his enemy’s cruelty and injustice: that, though he knew his claim was become a mere shadow, he would not injure his children so much as to renounce it: there might come a time, when they might revive it with better hopes; but, that he should not die in peace, were he to deprive them of it.

“ The counsellor, Mr. Dalby, and myself, urged him to accept the offer; as the interest would support himself, and the principal

principal would be an outset for his son, and put him into some genteel profession.

“ He would not hear of it, but persisted in an obstinate refusal.

“ The counsellor signified his refusal to Mr. Longford: he pitied and excused him.

“ In less than a week, a note was sent to Mr. Marney, from Mr. Longford’s clerk, to this effect—“ By order of Robert Longford, Esq. I write, to desire you to quit this parish as soon as possible; and he sends the inclosed to bear your expences.”

“ This note covered another, value fifty pounds.

“ Mr. Marney’s spirit rose at this order; he would have sent it back; but we joined to over-rule him. He would answer it, however; and it was to this effect—

“ HENRY MARNEY considers himself as an injured person, in all respects. In spite of Squire Longford’s mandate, he will take

the

the liberty to die in the parish where he was born: he will lay his bones near those of his ancestors; and his soul will complain to his grandfather's, of the treachery and injustice of his steward towards his heir."

" We all urged him to accept Mr. Longford's proposal; but he was inflexible. He was declining daily, but he scorned to complain. He lived about seven weeks in this village. He gave me the charge of his son; and bade him seek for some employment—he advised him to get into the army, or the navy, as the least unworthy of a gentleman.

" He spoke on this subject to Mr. Dalby, saying, his son must cut his bread with his sword.—" But, what will become of my daughter?—Oh, Sir! my heart bleeds for my dearest Anna!"

" The worthy Mr. Dalby promised to

invite

invite her to spend the summer in his family; and he would seek out for some eligible situation for her.

“ He took his hand, and kissed it; he thanked him incessantly while he staid in the room.

“ Mr. Dalby and the rest of us prayed with him, and he seemed comforted.

“ The next day, while he was wishing to see Mr. Dalby, he had a convulsion fit; and, as that gentleman entered the room, he expired.

“ Thus died Henry Marney, at only forty-six years of age; a gentleman of a high and generous spirit, and worthy of a better fate—but he is gone where merit is understood and rewarded!

“ I cannot say which was the most grieved, myself, or young Reginald. It seemed as if I had lost an only brother. I was rouzed by the necessary attention to the last duties to my friend and master. We followed

followed to the grave, and saw him interred in the church-yard, near the family vault. I ordered a stone to be put over him, with this inscription—

“ Here lie the remains of HENRY MARNEY, Esq.

Heir of the honourable family of MARNEY;

Formerly in possession of the Mansion of WOODLANDS,

In this parish.

Now, dispossessed of all worldly property,

He is gone to seek an immortal inheritance,

Where the wicked cease from troubling,

And the weary are at rest.”

“ I resolved to go to church the following Sunday, and on the Monday to set out with young Reginald for my own dear home.

“ The stone was put down one day in the week: and on the Sunday morning I went to weep over it; when, behold! the whole inscription was erased, and the following put in its place—

“ Here lie the remains of HENRY MARNEY,

The last of that family; formerly

Proprietors of WOODLANDS, in this parish.”

*beeploid*

“ I easily

“ I easily guessed from what quarter the alterations came. Mr. Dalby advised me to be silent, for we were not able to contend with the author.

“ I had spent the greatest part of the fifty pounds we received, in the necessaries, for the funeral, and putting the stone over the grave. On the Monday we set out in a cart, which carried us and our baggage to the next market-town; and from thence, in a stage-waggon, to London.

“ Reginald Marney was just turned of fifteen; he was a fine manly youth, with a genteel person, and an amiable disposition.

“ I carried him to my own house, and bade my wife receive him as one of our children. I had then living an hopeful son, and two dear and lovely daughters.”

Here Balderson stopped to weep. Our tears accompanied him. The past tale was melancholy, and the succeeding promised nothing better.

“ If this recital is too painful to you,” said I, “ let us defer it another week.”

“ God bless your kind and generous heart, lady!—No; I can now go on—

“ My son had a strong propensity to the sea. He had been several voyages; and was now waiting for a ship not quite ready to sail. He took an affection for Reginald Marney, and persuaded him to go with him. I acquainted Miss Marney with Mr. Dalby’s kind invitation, and advised her to accept it.

“ The poor thing wept bitterly: she complained that, after the loss of both her parents, she had attached herself to my family; that she must now be torn from her dear brother, and from the only person that loved or cared for her. I represented, that she would find herself in a better situation at Mr. Dalby’s, and live like a gentlewoman there; but, if she preferred our humble dwelling and board, she should

stay

stay with us, and be as one of our children. She reflected upon what I had said, and took her resolution to go to Mr. Dalby's; for she could not bear to be an expence to us, who had already done so much for her. She only begged that she might stay till her brother was gone to sea.

“ We fitted out young Reginald for a sailor, and waited for the time. My James was three years older than him, and took him under his protection. We had a melancholy parting. We could hardly tear Miss Marney from her brother; but it was necessary, and must be done. I took her from him, and comforted her as well as I could.

“ As soon as the first burst of grief was abated, I told her she must prepare for her journey. My wife fitted her out with decent mourning, and other necessaries; and, within a week after, I attended her to Mr. Dalby's.

“ I had a melancholy satisfaction in having discharged all the duties and offices of friendship to my beloved and respected Henry Marney. I shed my tears over his grave. I took a tender farewell of his daughter; and, having spent all the money I could raise, I returned home on foot, with just enough to buy my bread, and drank of the running stream. I did not tell my wife how close I was driven, and I returned to my usual course of life. I settled her books, and assisted in her trade.

“ Several years we lived in peace and comfort, but what some people would call hardly. We seldom tasted meat, unless of a Sunday. My daughters took in needle-work, when they could get it; for that business, like all others, is overstocked, and is the wretched resource of too many. Of an evening, I wove laces and bobbin, and made cabbage-nets; and, I can truly say, I did not eat the bread of idleness.

“ When

“ When our sailors returned home, then was our festival. They used to bring all the money they had earned. They lodged together, near us: they threw their share into our mess, and then we lived comfortably. The dear boys denied themselves every thing but necessaries, and were proud to contribute to our comforts and conveniences: they used to bring home gowns and linen for my wife and girls.

“ Miss Marney wrote to us once in a while, and gave an account of herself. By the recommendation of the good Mr. Dalby, she was taken as a companion to a widow lady, who had lately buried her own daughter. Miss Marney did honour to her credentials. She pleased the lady, and became very dear to her. She lived happily there several years.

“ Our children grew up to maturity. The young men earned more money, and were

were able to assist us. Our happiness increased every year.

“ Let me be grateful for the good I have received, and patient under the evil!

“ But now the passions implanted by Providence in the hearts of men for the wisest and best purposes, began to disclose themselves. Young and amiable persons, of different sexes, can hardly be much together, without feeling the impulse of nature, and the attachment of the heart.

“ I may say, without flattery, that both my daughters were handsome and modest; but the younger was the most engaging in her manners. Reginald Marney loved her before he knew all that love demands. Every return brought an increase of affection; and their greetings were so tender, that we all perceived their tendency.

“ I thought it my duty to check it, in respect to the memory of Henry Marney;

but

but still I could perceive that they loved each other most ardently. I advised with my son, and he reproved them both.

“ You are neither of you in a situation to think of marriage,” said he. “ The man who loves honestly and wisely, will wait till he can maintain a wife, before he takes one. I have seen my dear parents wrestle with poverty, and hardly could keep it at arm’s-end : I would not wish to see my children in the same situation. Self-denial is a duty which I can recommend, because I practise it. Oh, Reginald ! there is a lady in the world, who, if I were king of the globe, I would make my partner : but, far be it from me to wish her to share my homely lot, and to suffer what I have seen those most dear to me undergo. She knows not, she never shall know, the love I bear to her. May she live in the bosom of Peace and Plenty ! and, if she meets

with a man who can secure it to her for life, I will bless, and pray for him."

" I was proud of my son ; I blessed his noble and generous passion ; I forbade the lovers to think of marriage, and wished them to dissolve their engagements. Reginald refused to do that, but promised to postpone his marriage till after another voyage.

" A young ship-carpenter courted my eldest daughter. He carried all my children to the launching a ship for the service of the East India Company. He advised my sons to offer themselves to the captain. He said, it was a pity that two such clever lads should go with petty merchants and traders, in small ships, when they might go to India, and perhaps make their fortunes.

" My young men said, they would consider of it, and let him know.

" When

“ When they came home, the subject was canvassed among us all.

“ My wife and daughters were against it: they could not bear the thoughts of such long absences. But my James spoke like a man of spirit—“ It is my ardent wish, and shall be my endeavour, to lift you all out of this den of poverty, and to place you in a comfortable situation. For you I grudge no toils nor travels. I can but just get on, and help you a little; but, if I launch out in a better way, I may, in time, rise to preferment; and, at least, I will leave nothing untried. I trust that my brother Reginald is of the same opinion, and that he wishes to raise the girl he loves to a state of comfort: he would shame to see his children, who must bear the name of Marney, in this poor and sordid situation.—My father, I call upon you to confirm our resolution, and to com-

fort our dear women—and you, Reginald, must do the same."

" Reginald took his hand—" My dear brother, I will live and die with you; and I will go with you to India."

" My heart sunk at the thoughts of their long absence, and the dangers they might incur; but I should have scorned to let our interest and pleasure weigh against their good, and the generous motives they had urged. I gave a full consent to their going, and reproved the women for their selfish opposition to it. They wept in silence.

" Young Stevens, their friend, called the next day. He said, he had spoken to the captain, who desired to see them.

" They went to wait on him the same day; and they engaged themselves to go with him the following spring; and, in the mean time, they went a short voyage to Ostend,

Ostend, as usual ; and they returned in good time for the Indiaman.

“ We had a dismal parting. The girls were distracted with grief, and the mother not much better.

“ I had a heavy task to conceal my own fears and cares, and to support them ; but I knew it was my duty, and I did not shrink from it. I prayed to God for a blessing upon my dear sons.

“ Young Stevens was carpenter’s mate in the same ship. They all took leave at the same time. They went away in high spirits, apparently ; saying, they were going to make fortunes for us all.”

I called to Balderson to stop here—  
“ We will meet you here again next Wednesday ; and, in the mean time, we will consider how I can serve you and your grandson.”

“ Oh, Madam ! you are too good to us ! This child deserves your favour. He

is a clever and a cowardly boy. I have taught him to read, and he can say the Church Catechism quite perfect."

"That is a good beginning," said I.

"May God succeed your endeavours!"

I took Miss Elton's arm, and was followed home by their prayers and blessings.

After dinner, Miss Elton and I consulted about assisting the boy. I said, if I could put him out to any trade, so that he might be a good member of the community, I should be satisfied; and knowing that he could read, made me the more desirous to take him away from that vagabond life, and make him an useful man.

Miss Elton said, the schoolmaster of the village wanted an assistant, and had applied to her father; but she feared young Marney was not capable of the office.

I answered—"No; but he may be made so. I thank you for the thought: I embrace it. Let us go directly to the school-

schoolmaster's. I will ask him to take an orphan child as an apprentice. I will offer to pay him annually, which suits me better than paying all at once. I have it all in my heart. Let us go, my dear friend."

"God bless that generous heart, and make it's power equal to it's wishes! I attend you now."

Away we went, finished our business, and returned to tea.

The schoolmaster agreed to take him at once. I was to pay him ten pounds for the first year; and the salary was to be lessened every year, in proportion to the boy's proficiency, and capability of assisting the master.

It was to be a profound secret who placed him there; and he was to be called Henry Smith, for the name of Marney would excite jealousy and suspicion.

I never was better pleased in my life than with this agreement. This action gave

gave me credit with myself. I used to dream of the Marneys continually, which was not surprising; and I fancied those two fine pictures walked out of their frames, to thank me for my kindness to their descendant.

After every meeting with Balderson, I wrote down all that passed between us. At first, I did it to impress the story upon my memory; and afterwards, I thought it might, one day, be very valuable to young Marney.

It is from this I shall transcribe the particulars I shall send you.

I have sometimes intended to send away my packet; but then it has risen to my mind, that you would be better pleased to have the whole together: therefore I continue my narration.

I promise myself, that the family history of the Marneys will be as interesting to you as to myself.

The

The boy is my child by adoption, and is become very dear to me. He shares my affection and cares with my own children. I consider him as the right heir of my son's estate, and that we are bound to support and provide for him. Will you, my friend, blame me for this way of thinking? I answer to myself, that you will not. You also have adopted children, and they also shall be dear to me. When we meet, we will investigate these subjects; and, I trust, we shall agree to love all that are dear to each other.

I have written till I am weary, and shall now lay down the pen for a time; but I shall never be tired of telling you, that I am,

Your faithful and affectionate friend,

RACHEL STRICTLAND.

LETTER

The people are very much divided upon this question. He prefers to be called a man. He prefers

MRS. STRICTLAND, TO MRS. DARNFORD.  
IN CONTINUATION.

I Will now give my friend an account of my third interview with Balderson, and the sequel of the story of the Marney family. You will always remember, it is Balderson that speaks. We passed our time heavily during the absence of our beloved friends. My wife and the girls blamed me for letting them go. My daughter Agnes used to go moping about, and frequently weep by herself. I reproved her for it; but she gave me for answer, that she only lived for Reginald Marney; and, if she was not to be his wife, she did not wish to live at all. My other daughter, Hannah, had a stronger mind, and a more cheerful heart.

“ In the second year, our sailors returned, in good health and spirits ; and then our mourning was turned into joy.

“ The lovers were in raptures, and insisted upon being married immediately. My James attempted to persuade Reginald to defer it till after another voyage. He resented it, and they almost quarrelled about it. I pacified them ; saying, they should be married as soon as the banns could be published.

“ Stevens and Marney went out together the next day ; and, in the evening, they returned with licences, and insisted on being married on the morrow. I blamed them for spending so much money, when they might have been married so much cheaper. Reginald said—“ What is money good for, but to make us happy ?”

“ But, we have made no preparations.”

“ We have done that for you,” said Stevens. “ We have ordered a breakfast and

and a dinner at a public-house, and shall put you to no trouble or cost."

" I shook my head. " I am afraid you will want the money you thus squander away," said I.

" They desired I would not cast a damp upon their joys. Reginald sung these lines—

" Let's be merry, while we may ;

" Life is short, and wears away."

" On the morrow, the weddings were celebrated. It was, indeed, a festival. We threw aside care, and enjoyed our present happiness.

" Stevens had taken a lodg<sup>g</sup>ing for himself and his wife. Reginald went home with us. They agreed to spend the chief of their time together, and to leave their wives with us during the next voyage.

" Never was there a happier family, during the four months they staid at home.

They

They made preparations for another voyage the following spring.

" I thought I saw, at times, a gloom upon my James's manly countenance. One day, I questioned him upon the cause of it. He said, I had great discernment, and that I had a right to know every thought of his heart.

" During the time I was at Madras, an elderly gentleman, who had long resided there, took a great deal of notice of me. He examined me upon various subjects, and seemed satisfied with my answers. By degrees, he opened his mind to me. He said, he was engaged in a particular branch of trade, independent of the Company ; that he had lately lost the person whom he trusted with all his affairs ; that he wanted one to succeed him ; and that the man he should employ would be able to do well for himself, at the same time that he was serving him. There were three requisites

in

in the man he should chuse—good-sense, courage, and fidelity; “ and, I think, I have found them all in you,” said he. “ Consider of my proposal; and then tell me, whether it is worth your acceptance.”

“ I said, I was the son of poor, but honest parents, who depended, in some degree, upon the fruits of my labour and industry; that I was unwilling to engage in any undertaking that would remove me out of their reach, and put it out of my power to assist them. He said, that I should be enabled to assist my parents more effectually, and to build a fortune for myself; that he would settle upon me an handsome salary, and give me an opportunity to trade for myself beside. I said, I would consider of it, and let him know my determination.

“ A short time before we sailed, I waited on him. I told him, I was resolv'd to return home, and visit my parents; that, if

they

they consented to it, and if he was unprovided with such an agent as he wanted, I would enter into his service at my return.

“ I have kept this secret in my own heart, because I was unwilling to give you pain unnecessarily ; and, as to my mother, I dare not tell her at all, but must leave it to you, to break it to her tenderly after I am gone. My sisters have other men to care for, and to care for them ; they can spare me the better ; and I hope that you, my dear father, will give me your consent, and your blessing upon it.”

“ Here James paused, and waited my answer. I paused also, for I knew not what to say. At last I said—“ It is not for me to decide a point of so much importance. Judge, and decide for yourself, my son. I may suffer ; but I will not oppose your generous and manly designs and undertakings. God direct you for the best, and succeed you in all your doings !”

“ I could

“ I could not help weeping while I spoke. My son embraced me, and shed tears upon my face.”

“ My father ! if you forbid me, I will not proceed in this undertaking !”

“ No, I do not forbid you. I should be unworthy of such a son, if I was to check your brave and noble spirit. I will pray incessantly for blessings upon you.”

“ Thank you, my father ! But, remember, you are not to tell my mother till I am gone.”

“ Do Stevens and Marney know your intentions ?”

“ No. If Reginald had continued a single man, I would have invited him to go with me ; but now that he is married all is over. I shall not tell him till I leave him ; and I shall hope to send you letters through his hands. Keep my secret, and make your mind up to my destination.”

“ My

“ My son left me to my own reflections. My heart was oppressed with cares and fears ; but I still carried a cheerful countenance.

“ When they departed for India, my heart sunk within me : all my steadiness forsook me, and I was overwhelmed with grief. I dared not tell my wife the cause, for she was too much affected. She saw that I was more concerned than usual, for I lost my rest and appetite. She forgot her own grief, to comfort me. “ Cheer up, Balderson,” said she : “ I think you are worse than me.” I exerted myself, and overcame it.

“ There is a proverb, that says—“ God assists those who assist themselves.” I found it so ; for I recovered my health and spirits. Alas ! I had need of them ; for my trials were now approaching.

“ The autumn following was a very sickly time : an epidemical distemper raged

in

in London, and it's environs. It visited my poor family : we all had it more or less, but my wife died of it. I lost an industrious and faithful woman, who was the chief support of us all.

“ In the midst of my grief, I was comforted by the reflection, that she knew not of her son's destination ; and it became a source of consolation to me.

“ My daughters recovered by degrees, and so did I ; but we were every day more sensible of our great loss.

“ Our business depended upon my wife. People knew and loved her ; and they liked to be served by her. My daughters were not equally qualified : they knew not the way of the trade so well.

“ I did all in my power ; but I was not successful. Our business fell off, we had a severe winter, expences run high, business declined, and we were obliged to break into the money my sons left behind.

“ The

“ The following spring, in the month of May, my daughter Marney was brought to bed of this dear boy, the object of my hopes and cares. She nursed him with the utmost care and attention. I fancied I saw in him a resemblance of Henry Marney, and I doated upon him. I desired that he might be called after his grandfather; but my daughter, who almost worshipped her husband, insisted upon adding his name: so he was called Reginald Henry, but I always called him by the latter name.

“ My daughter Hannah had miscarried during her illness; and she grieved, that she also had not a child to present to her husband at his return.

“ The second year rolled heavily over us; and we reckoned the months, the weeks, and the days, when our dear friends were expected home.

“ One evening, in the dreary month of November, as my daughter Stevens and I were sitting over an handful of fire, (Agnes and her child were gone to bed, and we were preparing to follow them) we heard a knocking at the door.

“ We asked, who was there ; and the answer was—“ Your friend and relation.” I opened it immediately ; and Jack Stevens entered, in deep mourning.

“ We embraced and welcomed him : but, as soon as our emotions subsided, we considered his dress and appearance ; for his countenance wore mourning, as well as his body.

“ Unwilling to forebode farther griefs, I said—“ You have heard of our misfortune ?”

“ He shook his head, and replied—“ But you have not heard of mine ; that I must, unwillingly, relate.”

“ My

“ My heart sunk—“ Ha ! what, have you any more sorrows for us ?”

“ I have,” said he : “ prepare to hear them with patience and resignation ; and may God support you !”

“ I shook like a leaf, and felt as if I should faint.

“ Hannah said—“ Tell us quickly, and put us out of suspense.”

“ He sighed deeply ; and then—“ Reginald Marney is dead ; and James Balderston is gone up the country, nobody knows where : he had been gone several months before I came away from Madras.”

“ As I feared the worst, this last article revived me.

“ You have not heard that James is dead ?”

“ No, Sir ; I have a letter from him to you ; but it is dated four months before I sailed.”

“ Thank God for that! — But, tell me, how did Reginald die ? ”

“ Of an autumnal fever. It is a cursed country. I will never go there any more.”

“ I rejoice to hear that,” said Hannah.

“ We all were glad that Agnes was gone to bed ; and we consulted how we should break the dreadful tidings to her. I made up the fire, and we sat and talked away the whole night.

“ I thought there was a coldness and formality in Stevens’s behaviour, which I had never observed before ; but I imputed it to his concern for the tidings he brought, and his endeavours to conceal it.

“ When day-light was come, he went out ; and told Hannah, he should call again by and by.

“ When Agnes came down with her child, my tears flowed so fast, that I was obliged to conceal them. She said, “ I saw a man go by our house, so like Jack Stevens,

vens, that I should have thought it was him, if he had been in England." Hannah answered—" I have heard that he is arrived, and I expect him every hour."

" Have you a letter, sister?"

" I have."

" Where, then, are Reginald and James? No letters from them?"

" No."

" Father, what is the meaning of this?"

" I could make no answer.

" She set down the child, and came up to me. I was leaning against the wall, and crying like a child. She looked in my face, and saw my tears. She looked back, and saw Hannah weeping, and both silent. She gave a loud shriek, and fell into a strong fit.

" I will draw a veil over this scene of anguish, for your sake and my own. It was terrible. She was either in raving, or in silent fits, for three days and nights. At

intervals, she enquired for her husband. I dared not deceive her. I told her, he was dead, and she must submit to the will of Heaven.

“ In the midst of our distress, Stevens came in. He offered to take his wife away from me.

“ I called him cruel and ungrateful, to think of such a thing. He said, she could do no good, but only make him and herself unhappy.

“ I implored him, for Heaven’s sake, to take pity upon me, and help me to support my trials, which were already as much as I could bear. He turned out of the house in anger, and beckoned his wife to follow him; but she had too much humanity to leave me at that dreadful moment.

“ She advised me to send for a poor widow, that nursed us in our past illness, and did the last offices for my poor wife. She said, he had taken a lodgings, and insisted

listened upon her sleeping there; but she would be with us in the day-time, and wait to see what turn her sister's disorder would take. I thanked her, and followed her advice.

“ I had never left my poor Agnes, from the time she was struck down by this fatal news. Nature demanded some repose. I left her to the care of the nurse; I took the dear child with me, and went to rest, which I much wanted. My fatigue served me as an opiate: I slept till a late hour, and awoke refreshed and restored, and enabled to go through the painful duties that awaited me.

“ Hannah called upon me at noon. She said, her husband would not allow her to eat or sleep at my house; that he was engaged to work at the Dock-yard at Deptford, and was resolved to settle there; that he wanted to carry her there directly, but she would not go till she saw me through

my present distress, which, she saw, bore hard upon me.

" I desired her to tell her husband to send me my son's letter ; for my attendance upon Agnes made me forget to ask for it.

" On the morrow, she brought it, and I was eager to peruse it. I was surprized and concerned to find it had been opened, and closed again in a very bungling manner. In it he told me, he was going up the country, on the business he had mentioned to me. He desired me not to be alarmed, if I did not hear from him every year ; but it was his wish and intention that I should receive letters from him annually : that he had told his brothers, Marney and Stevens, that he was engaged in a gentleman's service, without giving them the particulars of his employment : that he sent me a remittance by them, and hoped to send me, at least, the same sum annually ; he chose to limit my expectations,

tions, but should rejoice to be enabled to exceed them.

“ The sum was carefully scratched out ; but, by turning it about to the light, I discovered it to be fifty pounds. I was struck to the heart at this proof of the baseness of the hands through which this letter was conveyed to me ; but I wondered it was not destroyed.

“ I now discerned the cause of Stevens’s shyness and reserve ; and I had still more villainy to apprehend from him.

“ I took no notice to my daughters ; but said, I took it unkindly that Stevens should shun me because of my poverty and distress : I hoped he would think better, and come to me ; for I had many questions to ask him.

“ The poor girl promised to use all her influence, to persuade him to come with her the next time ; and at last she brought him.

“ I saw that he was in confusion, and expected to be questioned on the subject of the letter ; but I had determined to attack him where he did not expect it first.

“ I asked him, whether he had received his pay from the Indiaman ?

“ He answered—“ Yes.”

“ Then you received also what was due to Marney and Balderson ?”

“ No ; I did not.”

“ That is very strange to me : you must know, that both myself and my daughter had need of it.”

“ I had not a proper power to receive their monies.”

“ I am sorry for it. I must enquire how and where the seamen’s wages are to be paid. In the mean time, you can pay me the remittance my son James sent me, as mentioned in the letter.”

“ It was not me to whom he gave it.”

“ Who, then ?” said I.

“ It

“ It was Reginald.”

“ Was not you with him when he died ?”

“ Yes ; but I was not allowed to take his effects.”

“ Who did, then, pray ?”

“ I do not know.”

“ God grant me patience !” said I ; “ and may they who have wronged the widow and the orphan, find their ill-gotten wealth grind their hearts in their last moments !”

“ Stevens was confused ; but he affected to be angry, and went out in a seeming rage.

“ After this enquiry, I saw little more of Stevens. My daughter always called once a day, but never ate nor slept at the house.

“ After a variety of sufferings, partly bodily, and partly mental, my poor daughter Agnes expired. In all her lucid inter-

vals, she prayed for death, and wished her child could have gone with her.

“ Now was I bereft of all my comforts, and left with the charge of this unfortunate child, to struggle through difficulties of every kind. I could only resign myself to the will of Heaven, and pray for strength and fortitude.

“ I sent word of the event to Stevens and his wife. She came to me ; she lamented my situation, and wished she was allowed to be constantly with me.

“ The day after, she came again. She said, her husband was concerned for me, but he could not bear to be present ; it hurt him too much ; but he had sent me five guineas towards the funeral.

“ If it is his own, I am obliged to him ; but I fear—I fear, he owes me much more than this : but I leave him to Heaven, and his own conscience.”

“ She

“ She begged me not to entertain suspicions of him, but to take what he had sent out of good-will. I bade her frame what answer she pleased, and give it to her husband.

“ She attended the funeral with me ; but he declined it. Perhaps he was too much conscience-stricken, to be able to be present : but why, then, did he not make restitution ?

“ The day after, he came to fetch his wife from my house. He told her, she must now take her choice, to go with him, or stay with her father : he was going away directly.

“ She wept in my arms. I said—“ Go, my child ; it is your duty to follow your husband : leave me to the protection of Heaven. God bless you ! and farewell !— Stevens, do not defy Heaven’s justice. May you repent of the wrongs you have done me, and be forgiven !”

“ He

“ He said, he had done me no wrong; but, that I had abused his good-will. He went away in anger; and his wife followed him, weeping.

“ I was left in this disconsolate situation, yet I did not despair. I lifted up my heart in prayer, and said—“ Nothing happens without thy permission, O Lord ! Do thou strengthen me to support my sufferings, and to rely upon thee to deliver me in thy own good time: thou canst make all these things work together for good to those who love and obey thee.”

“ The good woman, who did the last offices to my child and her mother, told me there was a man and his wife, who would be glad to take my house and shop off my hands.

“ It was a welcome offer, for I was no longer in a situation to carry it on. I treated with them; they took most of the furniture and fixtures.

“ I hired

“ I hired an upper-room in a poor house near by. I took a bed, and chairs, and furnished my room; and then went thither with my child, who gave me courage to struggle through my troubles, and rewarded my cares with his innocent smiles. For his sake, I exerted myself; and, if I could provide food for him, I cared not how poorly I fared.

“ I wove garters, laces, and bobbins; I sold ballads, and little chap-books. I was a petty hawker and pedlar: I carried a basket before me, and my child at my back.

“ I generally earned enough to buy us a supper at night; a loaf, or a few biscuits, fed us all day.

“ The poor widow lived next door to us: she used to wash for us, and keep my boy wholesome and cleanly; he thrived, and grew to my heart’s wishes.

“ When the spring came forward, I extended

tended my walks through all the environs. I implored people to buy of me for charity, and in pity to the poor orphan I carried with me. I told no feigned story; my griefs were real, and I sometimes affected my hearers: they would give a few pence to the little boy, and we returned them our blessings.

“ As soon as he could speak plain, I taught him his letters: he soon learned to read. I taught him Dr. Watts’s Hymns, and made him sing them to such as would give him the hearing.

“ I strove to impress upon his mind a strong sense of religion and virtue; of the duties to God, and to our neighbour. I taught him, that a poor beggar was better, in the sight of God, than a rich man without good principles, or the fear of God.

“ In a year’s time, I became inured to this kind of life. I earned money sufficient for all my wants. I paid my lodgings every

Saturday, and had a hot dinner on a Sunday.

“ I had still an hope warm at my heart, that I should sometimes hear of my poor James, and receive remittances from him: that I should make use of them to put my Henry out to some creditable trade, and make him a good and useful member of society. These were my wishes, and the only objects of my ambition.

“ I used to stroll about all the villages within ten miles, all the summer; but in the winter, I kept within the limits of the triple city, London, Westminster, and Southwark.

“ The people knew me, and always kept my lodging for me. The persons who took my house and shop were kind to me; they often sent me victuals, and they were desired to take in all letters for me.

“ I expected, when the India ships came home,

home, to hear from my son; but no letters came.

“ It came into my mind, that the same person who stopped my first remittance, might intercept any future ones, and also the letters that brought advice of them; yet I dreaded to find my suspicions well founded: I was unwilling to think so hardly of nature, and of relationship.

“ One day, when I was strolling through Leadenhall Street, near the India House, a young man, with a pen in his hand, took very kind notice of my child: he gave him six-pence. I was used to observe men’s countenances; and, I thought, he looked good and gracious.

“ A thought struck me—I asked him to let me speak with him, if it did not intrude upon his time. He bade me speak.

“ I stood in the street, and he upon the upper-step of the door. I told him, briefly,

that

that this child was a wretched orphan, who had no friend or protector but myself; that his father was a sailor in the India Company's service, and died at Madras at such a time; that his uncle remained there, and that both of them had wages due to them; and, if he could put me in a way to receive them, he would confer the greatest obligation upon me.

" He wished he might be able to do me this service. He took down the name of the ship, and the men, in his pocket-book, and promised to endeavour to serve me. I gave him my direction, and begged he would let me know his success. I told him the use I intended to make of the money for the child's service, and that I preserved my life for his sake.

" The young man was affected; he was convinced of my veracity. He gave me half-a-crown: I declined it; saying, it was enough to intrude upon his time, and to give

give him trouble. He put it again into my hand, gave it the grasp of friendship, and went away, saying—"Thou art no common beggar, I am sure!"

" His grasp went to my heart; it filled my eyes with tears. I said—"Thou art no common giver, I am sure!"

" He shut the door, and I went away with my heart lighter than it had been for a long time.

" When the spring advanced, it came into my mind to wander down to Woodlands, and to enquire after Miss Marney, from whom I had not heard of a long time. My own cares and troubles had so much engrossed me, that I could think of nothing else. Very little preparation had we to make. My child began to walk by my side, and I only carried him when he was tired. I bought him a pair of stout shoes, and away we went.

" We passed through Bow and Stratford,

ford, and steered away for Epping Forest.

“ In the thickest part of it we were overtaken by a violent storm of thunder, lightning, and rain, which I shall never forget. I took shelter in a hollow tree, and it kept me from all it's inconveniences.

“ In the midst of this awful scene, I felt none of those fears which used to attend me in happier days. I had no friends, no property, to lose. I held my child in my arms, and recommended him to the care of Heaven: it seemed to me, as if we were more immediately under it's protection.

“ Let the wicked tremble,” said I; “ we fear God, and he will defend us from all other fears.” I felt inexpressible peace and confidence in his mercy; and was, at that awful moment, happier than the man of property, for I had nothing to lose but this earthly tabernacle, and that, I was assured,

assured, I should exchange for a better, and my child would share it with me.

“ The storm went over towards evening. The Sun shone out in all his glory, and gilded the clouds with a thousand colours; when a troop of gipsies, or travellers, or beggars, though not of our cast, came running up to my tree.

“ They shook the rain off their tattered cloaths; they gathered sticks, and tore down boughs; they struck a light, made a fire, and set on an iron pot with meat to cook for their suppers.

“ I came out of my retreat, and was glad to see again human faces. They called out—“ A brother! a brother!” and addressed me in all the cant of their knavish trade.

“ I was ignorant of their meaning; but told them, briefly, that I was reduced to indigence, and had this child to provide for.

“ Like

“ Like true citizens of the world, they welcomed me, and invited me to partake of their supper. I accepted their hospitality with thanks, for myself and my child. We ate heartily, and one of them had a wooden cask of ale, and cups to drink out of.

“ I said, I believed I had made free with their lodging. They all cried out—  
“ Take it, father, and welcome, for this night!”

“ They invited me to go with them: they taught me some of their language, if ever I should meet with any of their brethren, for they were a numerous society.

“ I thanked them for their civility; but declined going farther with them, as my business led me another way.

“ Which way, father?” said the Patricio.

“ To a place called Woodlands, in the county of Essex.”

“ We

“ We are but just come from that village,” said he.

“ Indeed!—Can you tell me any tidings from thence?”

“ What family there would you enquire after?”

“ That of Squire Longford, who now lives at the Manor-house.”

“ Who did live there, you mean.”

“ Well, what did you know of him?”

“ What I know is from common report, which calls him a great villain.”

“ It calls him truly.”

“ He then told me the heads of the story I have related to you; and added, farther, that the daughter of the late Henry Marney had lived with a widow lady, who loved her dearly—that young Longford had fallen in love with her—that his father was enraged against him and her, and did her ill offices with the lady, her friend—

that

that he promoted a marriage between her and a young farmer, whom she could not like—that the son of the rector of the parish loved her likewise; and was forbidden by his father to think of marriage, as neither of them could support a family, and it would be ruin to both. Young Dalby, being enflamed with love and jealousy, and provoked by opposition, stole Miss Marney away from her patroness, and was going with her to Scotland; but they were pursued, and brought back again.

“ Old Longford persuaded the lady to send Miss Marney away from her; and she must have gone to the workhouse, but for the humanity of old Mr. Dalby, who took her into his protection, upon condition that his son should go to Cambridge directly, and not come home till he permitted him.

“ All these things had such an effect upon Miss Marney, that she fell into a

hasty decline. The lady, her friend, came to see her; she was reconciled to her, and offered to take her to her house again: but she declined it. She confessed that she loved young Dalby, but would not marry him to his ruin—She was going down to the grave, and did not wish to live. In short, she died, and was buried while we staid in the parish."

"Here," said Balderson, "I groaned with anguish. I exclaimed—"Oh, unfortunate family! Unhappy Anna Marney!—Yet, why do I say so, when she is released from a world of misery, while I sustain a life of cares and troubles?—The will of Heaven be done!"

"Can you tell me any farther particulars of the Longfords?"

"All the village mourned over Miss Marney: all cried shame on Longford! People cried out to their children—"There goes the man that ruined the Marneys!"

Learn

Learn to be contented with a little: it is better to be poor and honest, than to be rich and wicked; to be hated and despised, like that man!" .

" Some of these things were said in Longford's hearing: whether they touched his heart, or whether the judgment of Heaven followed him, I know not; but it was said, that he was troubled in mind, and he conceited that he was haunted; and so truly he was, by an evil conscience.

" There came a gentleman, who had made a great fortune in trade, and yet bore a fair character, excepting that he was counted very close and covetous. His name was Strictland. Longford sold the estates to him. They said there was some scruple about the title; but, for that, he was obliged to abate of the price. So Mr. Strictland bought it, and Mr. Longford and his son left it immediately.

" Some say, they are gone into a foreign

M 2 country;

country; and others, that they are gone into the North of England: but, for certain, they have left Woodlands; and, like a candle's end, they went out with a stink."

" I thanked the Patrico, or father of the gipsies, for his intelligence; which had saved me the labour of my journey, and some part of the pain I should have suffered from hearing all these things upon the spot.

" I slept with my child in the hollow tree that night; and the next day, I took my leave of the gipsies, and re-trod my steps back to London, ruminating upon the various fates and fortunes of men.

" If we could divest ourselves of prejudices," said I, " it signifies little to the public, whether particular families rise into affluence, or sink into indigence. We all spring from the same source, and to all there is but one event."

" At my return home, I found a letter  
from

from the good young gentleman who had promised to make enquiry after my son's wages. He told me, that a young man, who called himself their brother, had received their wages, and given a discharge for the money.

“ This could be no other man than Stevens; his base conduct was proved, past all doubt.

“ I looked over my letter from my son James. I found in it a direction to the gentleman, his patron, at Madras, under which I might write to him. This I had not observed before; and I determined to make use of it now.

“ I wrote an account of all that had befallen me during his absence, and a minute account of every part of Stevens's conduct; desiring him, in future, to direct to me at the house where I formerly lived; and I sent three duplicates, by as many different ships.

“ Thus I went on, from year to year, hoping and expecting to hear from my son; and, though always disappointed, I did not despair of it.

“ My mind often ran upon going to Woodlands, and to shew my boy the seat of his ancestors, and all the places adjoining; to shew him his grandfather's tomb-stone, and to relate his story; to impress these ideas upon his tender mind, and to excite in him a laudable ambition to imitate the virtues of his family, and avoid all that can disgrace it.

“ I had another and secondary motive: to try the spirit of the present proprietor of Woodlands, whether he had the charity and generosity to assist me in putting out the unfortunate heir of the family of Marney, so that he might earn his bread in a creditable way; and not lead the life of a stranger and a vagabond, as he had done hitherto.

“ These, Madam, were the motives that  
led

led me to Woodlands; and these made me send the boy to try Mr. Strictland's charity.

" I was near at hand: and, if he was encouraged, I would have come up and told my story and his; if repulsed, I was at hand to protect him.

" You know all that followed. In your heart, lady, I found all that I wished.

" I was afflicted with an ague, last winter, and that reduced me to a state of beggary. My cloaths were worn out, and I had no money to buy new ones. You have cloathed me and my boy, and enabled us to get on in our former way of life. We humbly thank you for all favours; particularly, for giving a patient attention to my story. May God give his blessing to you and yours!"

Here Balderson ended his story. He bowed, and motioned to retire.

I beckoned him to stay. I had heard him with various emotions, and now could

hardly command my voice to speak to him upon the most interesting subject.

“ Could you part with your boy?”

“ To do him good, I would part with my life.”

“ Perhaps, it would be a lesser trial, than to be separated from him. However, I will not be so cruel to ask it. I design to answer your secondary motive of coming hither. I will put your boy in a way to earn his living; but he must lay aside his name for a time: I must not be known to be his friend. You must continue in this neighbourhood, and you shall see him once in a week. I will allow you a shilling a week for yourself, and I will see you sometimes. This lady will be my substitute, and she will pay your pension for me. Will you, Balderson, accept my conditions?”

The man trembled with joy and gratitude. He prostrated himself upon the earth;

earth; he lifted up his eyes to Heaven, and tears ran fast down his cheeks.

The boy ran up to him, and clasped his arms round his neck—"What makes you cry, grandfather? Henry will not leave you for any body!"

Balderson arose—"Forgive him, lady! I will make him sensible of his obligations to you; and we will wait your commands."

I desired Miss Elton to buy some necessaries for the boy. We agreed, that he should come to her on the Monday following, and that she should go with him to the school. Also, she was to pay Balderson his pension. These matters being settled, they departed, and we returned home.

Every thing that we had planned was executed.

Here I shall leave them for a time, and return to the affairs of my own family.

Mr. Strictland fell into a decline. He grew very fretful; but did not believe himself in any danger, nor would accept of any assistance. He followed his workmen, as usual; nor would be persuaded to take any care of himself.

My second son had all the distempers incident to children: the whooping cough came last, and totally destroyed his constitution. He died at three years old.

I grieved for him: but his father's sorrow had more the appearance of anger; and it seemed pointed at me, as if it was my fault.

The year following, I lost my youngest child. She died of teething; and Mr. Strictland was very angry at it. He said it was d—d hard!

The two surviving ones were very healthy and promising.

I taught them to read, as soon as they could speak plain; and their proficiency was

was a sweet reward for my trouble and attention. They loved me in return; and I spent my pleasantest hours in their company.

Mr. Strictland loved them in his way; but the harshness of his temper, and the warmth of his expressions, made them afraid of him, and checked the affection they would otherwise have felt for their father.

Ill-tempered people suffer more pain than they inflict; and this is a just punishment of Heaven. It is not more our duty than our interest to restrain our passions; our happiness depends upon it.

One day that Mr. Strictland was riding, near Mr. Elton's, he was taken with a faintness that took away his strength. He rung at the gate. The servant came, and saw that he was ill; he helped him to alight, and led him into the house, where he had a fit. The family gave him all

the assistance in their power, and shewed every mark of friendship and attention.

After he was perfectly recovered, Mr. Elton took the liberty to advise him to settle his worldly affairs: that it would not hasten his death, but only make a due preparation for it—that he spoke as his parish-priest, who thought it a part of his duty. He also desired him to consult a physician.

Mr. Strictland received his advice properly, and thanked him for it. He said, he would consider of it: that he had no good opinion of doctors or lawyers; but, in some cases, they might be necessary evils.

They invited him to stay to dinner; but he chose rather to come home.

A short time afterwards, he called at Mr. Southgate's, and had another fit there. Mr. Southgate gave him the same advice that Mr. Elton had done; to make his will,

will, if he had any particular dispositions to make. They both thought him declining very fast, and that he should lose no time.

He desired Mr. Southgate to come and dine with him the first day he could spare ; and added—“ Bring an honest lawyer with you, if you know one.”

Mr. Southgate appointed the Monday following. Mr. Elton was invited to meet him.

I wondered what this invitation meant. Mr. Strictland said, it was upon private business.

He took his guests into one of the other parlours, which was contrary to his usual custom ; and, when there, asked them to be his executors.

He said, he hated lawyers : that one of that craft had ruined the family of Marney, formerly proprietors of Woodlands ; and he was resolved that none of them should be his executors—that he believed them both

both to be honest men, and that they would not wrong his wife and children; and therefore he begged them to take upon them this trust.

They both thought well of me; and thought it would be for my service to accept it, lest it might otherwise fall upon strangers, who might give me trouble.

They both promised to accept it, and to discharge it faithfully.

In the afternoon, the attorney came, by Mr. Southgate's order. He took minutes from Mr. Strictland's mouth, and was ordered to get them put into proper form as soon as possible; and, within a week, the will was signed, sealed, and executed, in due form.

It was fortunate that this business was done at the time; for Mr. Strictland did not live above a month after.

He had fainting-fits often: but still he  
thought

thought there was no danger; yet he grew weaker every day.

One day, he consented to lay down after dinner. I assisted him, and sat by his bedside till I saw him asleep; and then went into the common parlour.

At the usual hour of tea-drinking, I sent Mrs. Gilson to see whether her master was awake. She staid some minutes; and then came down in an odd way, looking frightened.

“ Is your master asleep?” said I.

She answered—“ Yes. He will never more wake in this world, I believe !”

I was surprized; though we had long expected this awful event.

I went up stairs with her, and found it was even as she had said. Mr. Strictland was departed without a struggle, and lay as if asleep.

I sent immediately for Mr. Elton, and put myself under his direction. I was affected

affected with various emotions, and could hardly understand my own sensations. I felt compassion and concern for the father of my children, thus dying in the prime of his life. I wished that I had loved him more! I wished that he had allowed me to love him! I was awed, and frightened; yet I could not take any blame to myself.

Poor Gilson was deeply affected. She loved him, as a parent loves her child; and excused his faults, as a parent does by a foward one.

Miss Elton kindly accompanied her father, and staid with me till the most distressing scenes were all over.

The next day, Mr. Southgate and Mr. Elton came together. The will was opened, and I found myself joined with these two gentlemen in the executorship, which I had not expected. I was sensible that I owed it to their good offices; and they

they owned that they had urged it, as it would enable me to receive the rents, and to act for my children.

We united in paying the last duties to Mr. Strictland, and in settling his affairs. I found new business and duties coming forward every day.

I will here conclude this enormous pacquet, and send it to Mrs. Martin, to convey to your hand. I shall soon have another ready. I have matter sufficient for another, before I conclude my story; but what remains will be drawn into a smaller compass.

I have also a farther demand upon you; but this I will enlarge upon in my next pacquet.

Believe me, always, my Fanny,

Yours, faithfully,

RACHEL STRICTLAND.

LETTER

## LETTER IX.

MRS. STRICTLAND, TO MRS. DARNFORD.

IN CONTINUATION.

M R. Strictland had a mean opinion of women: he had frequently told me so. He said, they were not to be trusted with power, nor with money: for the latter they had no occasion; having meat, drink, and lodgings, provided for them.

“ But, then, cloaths and linen, Sir? Have we no occasion for them?” said I.

“ Yes; but not for half the quantities you buy, and make up. Men are more reasonable; they seldom have more than are necessary. I never have more than one coat in a year; and I wear them one under another, to spare them.”

There was no replying to this argument. “ *I do so,*” was a clincher.

Thus

Thus thinking, and thus acting, how can I account for his last disposition of his property? Can I do otherwise than impute it to the influence of the two gentlemen, who assisted him in making his will, and to hasten through a disagreeable business?

Thus it was—He left all his landed estates, not less than eighteen hundred pounds a year, to his only son; under the following restrictions. When he should come to the age of twenty-one, he was to be paid a rent-charge of one thousand pounds *per annum*, and a thousand pounds sterling to begin the world with. He was to be put into possession of the house called Woodlands, and to reside there. The rest of the income of the estates was to accumulate, *from that time*, till he should attain to twenty-five years; and then he was to receive it, with all the remainder of his fortune.

The estates were entailed upon his sons,  
grandsons,

grandsons, &c. and, failing heirs, to his daughters; failing both, to his sister, in like manner: and all the heirs subjected to the same restrictions.

To his daughter, the sum of six thousand pounds, if she married with consent of her mother and guardians, to be paid on the day of marriage. If otherwise, to be paid three thousand when she should come of age, and the remainder at twenty-five years.

To his widow, six thousand pounds, (somewhat more than he received with her) over and beside her marriage-settlement.

To Martha Gilson, widow, his faithful servant, an annuity of twenty pounds a year, for her life; and ten guineas for mourning.

To every servant in his house, one year's wages.

He appoints his wife Rachel Strickland, the Reverend Thomas Elton, and Richard Southgate,

Southgate, Gent. joint executors of his will, and guardians and trustees for his children. He leaves an hundred pounds legacy to each of the gentlemen, for their trouble.

He makes his wife the residuary legatee. He empowers her to receive the whole rents and income of his fortune during the minority of his children ; that she may provide for the maintenance and education of his children, and that they may be dutiful and obedient to her. But he restrains it by the following conditions—

She is to receive all his income, and to have the care of his children, so long as she remains a widow ; but, in case the said Rachel Strictland should marry again, she is no longer the receiver of his rents, or the guardian and trustee of his children : yet, even in this case, he gives her back all her own fortune, in addition to her marriage-settlement ; and the children are to be

be taken from her, and put under the care of the other guardians, who are to be accountable for the rents till his son comes of age ; and, in that case, they are entitled to an additional legacy of two hundred pounds each.

He then concludes, and executes this his last Will and Testament.

Now, my friend, what think you of this Will? I will tell you my opinion ; that it is the most generous, just, and prudent one, that I ever saw or heard of.

I subscribe to the conditions with my hand and heart ; and wish more men were as wise as Mr. Strictland, in guarding their property for their children, and restraining their widows from squandering their fortunes, and buying themselves husbands.

I have, at this moment, in my mind's eye, a widow, turned of sixty years of age, in whose hands a too generous husband left

the

the disposal of a great part of his property. This woman, instigated by a passion that, at her years, is a disgrace to her sex, married a man under thirty; settled all her property upon him; wronged, cheated, and insulted her children, and grandchildren; and became the contempt and disgrace of her family, of her sex, and of the world.

It is not our sex only that have played the fool in these cases; yet it is in the power of the other only to lay a restraint upon us and themselves. It would be a wise act of the Legislature, who have limited the time of entering into matrimonial connections, to set limits to the time also when they should cease, and put the superannuated lovers into custody.

It is not easy to describe the situation of my mind at this time, both with respect to the past and the present. I wished to have a grateful sense of Mr. Strictland's generosity and confidence towards me; yet,

yet, on the other hand, I had a smarting remembrance of his churlish temper and behaviour. How was I to blend together such contradictory feelings as I could neither investigate nor comprehend !

I resolved not to affect a grief I did not feel, nor yet an indifference that might be deemed disrespectful ; but to shew my gratitude by a faithful discharge of the trust he had honoured me with, and a constant and unremitting attention to the interest and happiness of his children.

The gentlemen informed me, that, being named first as executor, the chief of the power resided in me ; but they would always be ready to give me their advice and assistance, whenever I should call upon them.

I told them, I should never take any material step without their advice and probation ; and I wished them to know every part of my conduct.

“ Permit

" Permit me, Madam," said Mr. Southgate, " to ask, whether you propose to live at Woodlands, or not; and whether you do not think, in that case, it might be let to advantage, during the minority of your son ?

" That," said I, " requires some consideration. I wish to pay all due respect to Mr. Strictland's memory, and to second his wishes and intentions to the utmost of my power. I know it was his design to bring up his son to the same business which he followed himself: he wished him to study agriculture, and to practise it. I would not oblige him to it, against his inclination; but I would give him an opportunity to know what it is, and to make a fair choice. It is more than time that he was put to school; but I should wish him to spend his summer vacation at Woodlands constantly, to see the occupations of

the husbandman, and to know the farming business."

" But, in the mean time, who is to take care of the land ? There is between two and three hundred pounds a year estate, which Mr. Strictland used to keep in his own hands : who is to take care of that ? "

" Why, Sir, I have been thinking of that. I would put in a bailiff, or overseer of the farm, during my son's minority ; and he should give an account of the profits of the farm to you, Sir, who are best qualified to understand it ; and, if you would be so kind as to overlook him, I should be ready to make acknowledgment for your trouble."

He seemed displeased with what I had said. I feared I had affronted him by offering him an acknowledgment for his services. But, after he was gone, Gilson told me, that, from things that had fallen from him,

him, she suspected that Mr. Southgate would like to farm the lands himself.

I asked Gilson, where was her son? She said, he was head-man to a farmer in the next parish, but would be disengaged at Michaelmas.

I sent for Mr. Elton, and told him the plan I had laid; which was, to take young Gilson for my bailiff and overlooker.

I said, Mrs. Gilson's long and faithful services well deserved a recompence; that I meant to continue her as housekeeper for me at Woodlands, and to give her her son's company and protection, which would be making her happy. I could trust the house and furniture to her care and fidelity: I and my children could go and come as it suited us; and they would be always ready to receive us, and happy to see us with them.

Mr. Elton said, my plan was at once benevolent and prudent; but that he had

something to propose, that, he thought, would be an improvement to it, and what he was desired to mention to me. He said, there were two farms laid together, and either of them was a sufficient one to employ one overseer or tenant—that Mr. Southgate wanted to put his eldest son into business, and wished to have one of these farms, which was, in a manner, under his own eye—that he would give me a fair price for it, and refer it to arbitrators chosen between ourselves. He wished to have the land nearest his own—that there was an house upon it, which Mr. Strictland let in tenements to three of his workmen; if I would have that house put into a tenantable state, he would be at half the expences, and in every thing would refer to a third person—that Mr. Southgate was my neighbour and friend, and I might oblige him without any disadvantage to myself, but rather the contrary.

I told

I told Mr. Elton, that I would readily adopt his improvement to my scheme; and that he should chuse a person to be my arbitrator, and both of them should treat with Mr. Southgate.

When I told Gilson my intention respecting her son and herself, she could hardly believe that such good fortune was reserved for her. Her joy and gratitude were extreme. I told her, I was deeply in her debt, for her good offices towards myself, my husband, and my children; and I should study for opportunities to repay them.

Mr. Elton and Mr. Southgate came to our house soon after. They brought with them two eminent farmers, as arbitrators between Mr. Southgate and me. The lands were divided, the terms settled, and men were set to work to ditching, fencing, and laying out the lands. The tenants were warned to leave the house as soon as

possible; but I was concerned for them, and enquired after places for their accommodation.

There were five cottages, that stood straggling, with ground behind them: they were destined to be pulled down, rather than be at the expence of repairing them.

Being used to hear these subjects discussed between Mr. Strictland and Mr. Southgate, I had imbibed the opinion, that consolidating farms, and destroying cottages, was a cruel and wicked policy, and had a tendency to depopulate the villages, and destroy the peasantry of the land. I therefore declared myself the protector and patroness of this most useful order of men.

I bought the five cottages, and the ground about them. I ordered them to be put into thorough repair immediately. Three of them were appropriated to the

three

three families that were warned out of the farm-house hired by Mr. Southgate ; and they were to be got ready as soon as possible. A fourth I made considerable improvements in, and destined it to a purpose that I shall explain by and by. The fifth was allotted to a reduced family, that I protected.

I could have let twenty cottages, if I had them to dispose of ; but I had business enough upon my hands ; and I was pleased with, and proud of, my new estate.

In the next place, I had to think of Henry Marney, and to appoint his destination.

I sent for the schoolmaster, and enquired of him, what kind of boy he was, and what proficiency he had made.

The schoolmaster spoke very highly of him. He said, that Henry was an exceeding clever youth, and deserved a bet-

ter education than it was in his power to give him.

“ Then he shall have it,” said I; “ and I thank you for giving me this information.”

I paid the master his due, and something more. I ordered him to send the boy to Woodlands in the following week. I determined to examine his capacity and disposition, and to decide for him accordingly.

I put him into decent mourning before I took him into the family. I presented him to my son: I told him, this youth was descended from an honourable family, fallen into misfortunes, and I wished him to love and be kind to him.

To Henry I said—“ This youth is to be your patron, friend, and benefactor; and you must love and honour him.”

He said—“ It is enough for me to know that he is your son.”

I answered—

I answered—"No: you must love him for his own sake."

"But, I must first love him for yours. Can I ever forget what you have done for me and my grandfather?"

"You are right to remember it, my good lad; but, in future, I would wish you to attach yourself to my son: he will have it in his power to be your friend hereafter."

He said, he would obey me in every thing.

My son had never before a companion, except his sister. Young Marney shewed him the plays of boys, in their different seasons: he played with him, and amused him in a way he had never known before.

I had no occasion to tell Jonathan to love his companion: he took a strong affection for him, and was never easy but when he was with him; and his greatest fear was to lose him.

“ Pray, mamma,” he would say, “ don’t send Henry away from me again : I cannot spare him.”

“ But, my child, he must go to school, and you too.”

“ Then, let us go together,” said he; “ and then I shall be happy.”

“ I will consider of it, and let you know in proper time.”

I consulted Mr. Elton about a school for them ; for I resolved that they should go together, and that I would encourage their friendship, in hopes of it’s being of mutual advantage to them. Young Marney had nothing rude or vulgar in his manners. He had conversed chiefly with his grandfather, who had not suffered him to acquaint with other boys of his own degree, but had taught him courtesy and gentleness. He had never had companions till he went to school, where he behaved

behaved so well as to be beloved by the master and the scholars.

In two years time, he was much improved: he read English very well, and wrote a tolerable hand. There was a foundation laid, upon which should be raised any kind of edifice that might be judged necessary and proper.

I have not spoken of his grandfather; but, I trust, you will give me credit for my conduct towards him.

You will think, I could not take his darling under my roof, and forget the cares and sufferings of his venerable parent.

It was one of my cares to provide a bed of repose for his old age. It was now in my power to do it, without injury to any one. I had been contriving a place of peace and comfort for his residence.

There were two old women, sisters, who were under a peculiar distress. I had assisted them privately in my husband's

life-time, but now I took them openly under my protection.

They had lived in a miserable cottage, that hardly sheltered them from the weather. One was a widow, the other an old maiden. The widow had a daughter, grown up: she and the sister went out to washing, ironing, cleaning, and every other kind of women's work. The widow was lame: she staid at home, did needle-work, and spun wool.

They were honest and industrious, and got their living; and always paid their rent punctually, which was forty shillings a year. Sickness visited this poor family: the widow was laid by with the rheumatism; the sister and daughter had agues. They were incapable of work, and lived upon the little they had saved to pay their rent. The owner of the cottage, almost as poor as themselves, pressed for the rent. They were going to sell their beds, and to

lie

lie on the floor, when Mr. Elton heard of their distress. He made a collection for them ; the rent was paid ; and they remained in the cottage, which was to them a comfortable dwelling.

Miss Elton made their case known to me. I had a receipt for an ague, of approved efficacy, which I sent them ; and also victuals, which were wanting to make my medicine take effect. I sent them warm coverlids for their beds, and ordered the thatching of their house to be repaired.

Between the Eltons and myself, we carried them through a severe winter. In the spring, they recovered, and returned to their work and their wages again.

From this time, I kept my eye upon them, and gave them casual assistances ; and with them I intended to place my friend Balderson.

For them I reserved my fourth cottage ;  
to

to which I made great additions and improvements.

There was an entry with a door on each side of it ; a stair-case, which divided the two upper rooms ; a kind of loft over these, to put lumber in. The best room on the upper floor was for Balderson. I furnished it with a good linsey-wolsey bed and window-curtain ; the rest of the furniture suitable and comfortable. In the room below stairs, I put a matt and great chair for Mr. Balderson, and several other necessaries and conveniencies.

I set them rent-free, paid them for Balderson's board, and settled them a comfortable and happy family.

I had likewise to reduce and regulate my own family.

At Michaelmas, Mr. Joseph Gilson entered my service. The head-man was very much offended : he said, he was as capable

pable of overlooking the farm as Joe Gil-  
son, and he would not stay to have another  
servant put over him.

I said, he was at liberty to go, or to stay  
upon my conditions. He said, that was a  
poor reward for faithful services.

I told him, he might stay till he could  
get a place that suited him; and I was ready  
to give him a good character, which, I  
thought, was all that was due from me  
to him.

The man was dissatisfied, and went  
grumbling about the house.

I thought there was some reason for his  
complaint, and considered how to sa-  
tisfy him.

I spoke to Mr. Southgate upon the sub-  
ject; and he offered to take him as head-  
man to his son in the new farm. He spoke  
to him, and engaged him in his service,  
which made all easy.

I retained

I retained no more servants than were necessary for the management of the farm. Mrs. Gilson was to be mistress of them all, and to give me an account of their proceedings. Mr. Southgate promised to superintend the farming business.

Mr. Elton recommended me to a worthy clergyman, his friend, who took twenty youths to educate. He said, they had all the advantages of a public school, without the dangers of one; and, he thought, I could not do better than to place my son there.

I enquired, whether two vacancies were there? I received for answer, that there would be two after Christmas.

I resolved to stay at Woodlands till I should have fulfilled this duty, and then to go to London for a month or two. I solicited Mr. Elton to give me his daughter's company to London. He was very unwilling

willing to comply with my request. He said, London was the place, of all others, the most likely to spoil young people; to pervert their good principles, and give them bad ones instead of them. I promised to take care what company I should carry her into. I returned to the charge so often, that he could not entirely refuse me; but he insisted that she should return on his first notice. He said, he was not certain that London would not corrupt me; that he should judge by me, how far his daughters were to be trusted, and whether they could return to their own station again.

Between Michaelmas and Christmas, I made an excursion through the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, accompanied by Miss Elton and my daughter, and left my boys to the care of Mrs. Gilson. This tour was of service to my health and spirits.

spirits. I was amused, and enjoyed my liberty without abusing it.

“ Tow’red cities please us then,  
“ And the busy hum of men.”

I had been so long secluded from these scenes, that it seemed like going into another world; and I seemed afraid of mixing in society.

I was astonished at surveying the trades and manufactures of different towns, and the buzz of the number of inhabitants.

I staid not long any where, and returned to Woodlands before Christmas. I thought there was something right in spending my Christmas there. I had not run away from it immediately; I had employed my time usefully; and, when I had sent my son to school, I was free to enjoy that liberty of which I had been so long deprived.

Mr. Elton gave me credit for it: he praised my conduct; and said, it gave him confidence

confidence in me in future, and encouraged him to trust his daughter to my care.

The boys were rejoiced at my return, and gave me unfeigned marks of affection and sincerity.

My daughter was offended at being excluded from their plays and exercises ; but now, she took upon her, from being allowed to go abroad with me, and to see great towns, and to give account of her travels.

As soon as the holidays were over, I carried the boys to school. I cautioned Henry Marney against mentioning the manner of life he had led with his grandfather ; but, at the same time, to avoid telling untruths ; but to be discreet, and to know how to keep a secret.

I told the master, that this boy was descended from a good family, but by misfortunes reduced to indigence ; that he had lost some time in his education, and

I wished

I wished him to have additional lessons, that he might recover the ground he had lost. My son ought to have been sent to school sooner; but he was four years younger, and might recover, and overtake the other youths of his age.

Balderson parted with his Henry with a magnanimity that did him honour. He thought any reluctance on his part, would be ingratitude to his and his child's benefactor.

I now prepared for my journey to London. I hired a job-coach, which carried Miss Elton, myself, my daughter, and my maid Peggy.

I promised myself a great deal of pleasure, but found myself as much disappointed as people generally are in the schemes they form, and the expectations they build upon them.

Miss Elton and I were like people dropt from the clouds into a strange land.

We

We knew nobody, nor did any body know us. There seemed to me a strange alteration in the dresses and manners of the people: they were as foreigners to me, and I to them. We saw the new buildings, and admired the magnitude and populousness of the great city. We saw all that excites admiration and surprize; the churches, the theatres, the pantheon, the hospitals, and all that strangers desire to see.

We were, indeed, as much strangers as if we had come from another country; and wanted an interpreter, to make us understand all we saw; for to us it was incomprehensible.

I had been there but once before, Miss Elton never; and we were exactly in the same state of ignorance, wonder, and disappointment.

In the churches, we heard the doctrines of high Calvinism, which I always thought had been confined to the dissenters; and, I

was

was told, all the popular preachers held forth these dogmas. They frightened me, but they did not convince me.

I said something of this kind to Miss Elton. A gentleman-like man, who assisted us to our coach, heard me.

“ He said—“ You have heard, Madam, that the good people of England like to be told they are ruined. In like manner, they are best pleased with those preachers who send them all to the devil. There is a fashion in preaching, as in every thing else; and these men are now all the fashion.”

I thanked him for his information : but I dared not encourage his acquaintance ; for, I had been told, it was dangerous to converse with strangers in London.

I was equally disappointed at the theatres. The good old plays, that I was used to admire, were so mutilated, that I hardly

I hardly knew them again ; and the new ones had nothing that interested me.

A third subject gave me serious concern—the increase of criminals, and the improvements in the arts of stealing and picking pockets, house-breaking, and every kind of robbery.

“ Surely,” said I, “ these are not merely conjectures : they are demonstrations of the increase of vice of every kind ; and that our laws, or the administration of them, are very defective. There must be great faults somewhere.”

We new-modelled our cloaths, but not to the extremes of fashion. I resolved to attempt a medium between them. But Fashion loves extremes, and demands unlimited homage from her votaries : to her they sacrifice reason, propriety, and even common sence.

I once saw the following lines written in a lady’s pocket-book. If the admonition is

is good, it signifies nothing who was the author—

“ Let not your form, or inclination,  
“ Be govern'd by the harlot Fashion ;  
“ Treat her, in manners, and in dress,  
“ As handmaid, not as governess.”

I honour those who have courage enough to withstand the torrent ; and, without affecting singularity, dress within the bounds of modesty, and simplicity of manners : it indicates every thing that is right.

Mr. Elton began to remonstrate on our stay in London. We went thither on the twentieth of January, and staid till the end of March. His last letter was more like a command than a request. Miss Elton resolved to obey it, and I to carry her safely home.

We were joyfully received at the parsonage. Mr. Elton confessed I was better than he expected, and returned to his first notice.

My

My worthy Gilson wept for joy at my return to Woodlands. She said, that I had spoiled her, by my kindness and indulgence, and she could hardly endure my absence. I assured her, I should see her often; and that I had not yet determined where to fix my residence in the winter, and in summer I should be chiefly at Woodlands.

I made an excursion in the spring, and took Kitty Elton for my companion. Her father limited the time of my return. Finding he was unwilling to let his daughters be long absent from home, and was in prudent apprehension of their being unsettled, and uneasy in the station where Heaven had placed them, I cast about for a companion whom I might retain with me, and who might assist me in the education of my daughter.

My mind rested upon you, my dear Fanny. I began my chace after you. I

went to several places before I could find any means to trace you. At last, I went to W— : there I met with Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Bailey ; and, by their means, I got a kind of access to my friend.

You have told me your story ; and you have insisted upon mine. I have given it sincerely ; and I expect your remarks with respect and apprehension.

And now, my dear friend, I draw my business to a point, and must insist upon a categorical answer.

You ask, what farther I have to ask of you ? How far does my curiosity extend ? Even to the extent of the limits you have prescribed to it.

You have told me, you are engaged in the service of an unfortunate lady, who wanted a friend, and deserved to find one. You have half promised to relate her story to me.

The

The story of an haunted house, and a lady deranged in her mind, and restored by your offices, is sufficiently interesting to excite a colder curiosity than mine. But, when I have heard it, I am to judge, whether you can, and whether you ought to leave her.

This brings me to the second point I have to insist on.

When you have told me this story, I must again ask, whether, and when, you will permit me to see you? Shall I come to you, or will you come to me?

If you refuse to tell me this, and conceal yourself from me in mystery and obscurity, I must then give you up to the person who holds you by a stronger tie than a long friendship and disinterested affection.

This I am unwilling to believe. You have told me great part of your story, and given me reason to expect the remainder.

I wait

I wait for your next with no small degree of impatience: it will enable me to decide on many things that are yet in suspense. Hasten it to me as soon as possible, and depend upon my fidelity and secrecy where it is necessary. I am, my dear friend,

Yours unfeignedly,

RACHEL STRICTLAND.

**END OF VOLUME THE SECOND.**

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